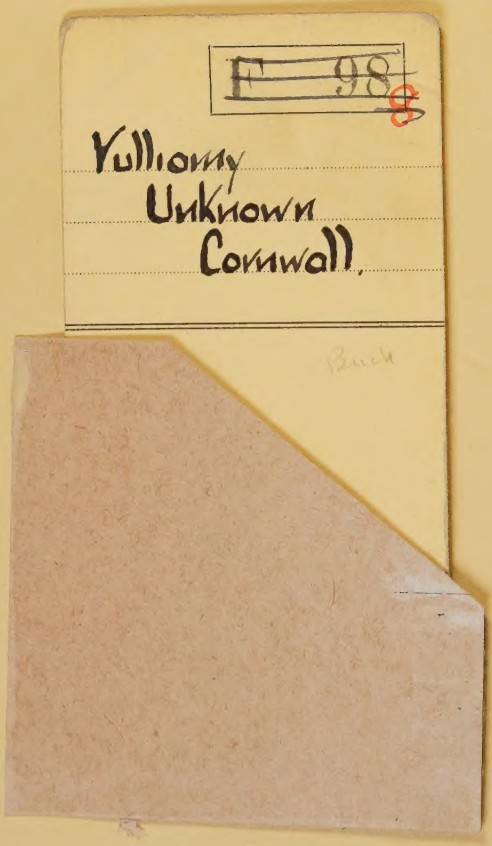

F 98
8
Yulliomy
Unknown
Cornwall

942.37

12 MSC B 4035

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

LIBRARY SERVICE

Author

Title

BOOK STORE

Books or discs must be returned on or before the last date stamped on label or on card in book pocket. Books or discs can be renewed by telephone, letter or personal call unless required by another reader. After library hours use the Ansafone Service (01-698 7347). For hours of opening and charges see notices at the above branch, but note that all lending departments close at 1 pm on Wednesday and all libraries are closed on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays and Saturdays prior to Bank Holidays

METROPOLITAN SPECIAL COLLECTION

UNKNOWN CORNWALL

THE COUNTY SERIES

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

UNKNOWN KENT
Written and illustrated by
DONALD MAXWELL

UNKNOWN SUSSEX
Written and illustrated by
DONALD MAXWELL

UNKNOWN SURREY
Written and illustrated by
DONALD MAXWELL

UNKNOWN ESSEX
Written and illustrated by
DONALD MAXWELL

UNKNOWN WARWICKSHIRE
By M. DORMER HARRIS
and illustrated by J. E. DUGGINS

THE BODLEY HEAD

LOADING HERRINGS ON ST. IVES QUAY.

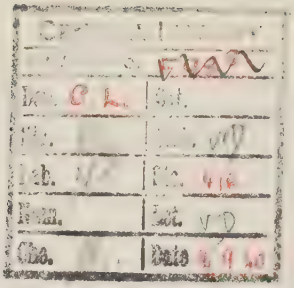
UNKNOWN CORNWALL

By C. E. VULLIAMY, F.R.G.S.

With Illustrations in Colour and Black and White by

CHARLES SIMPSON, R.I., R.O.I.

LONDON: JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LIMITED



B4035

94237

First published in 1925

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY W. W. CURTIS, LTD., CHEYLESMORE PRESS, COVENTRY.

PREFACE

WHEN we apply the term "unknown" to any district of England, it is clear that the term has to be understood in a strictly relative sense. Few English counties are better known, in the vulgar sense, and few have been more frequently described than Cornwall. In order to avoid topographical platitudes (of which there is no lack elsewhere) I have treated as relatively unknown certain literary and historical materials which are delightful in themselves and worthy of remembrance. I have taken many passages from old books, which are not accessible to the general reader, not with the idea of gratuitously stuffing my own, but because such books, in the phrase of the great Tussaud, "combine amusement with instruction," and because such writers as Carew and Borlase have a rare charm, while C. S. Gilbert deserves a place among the literary curiosities of his period.

In relating stories and legends, I have availed myself of the collections of Hunt and Bottrell, but I have sometimes modified their versions by the accounts which I have received from the Cornish people themselves, and several stories are now published for the first time.

It is not intended that the book should be regarded as a guide, or as a compendium of local knowledge.

The co-operation of my old friend, Charles Simpson, has been a very great pleasure to me. His sense of Cornish landscape is more than a mere pictorial appreciation. His knowledge of the county and of its natural history is far deeper

than a mere dabbler's knowledge. That is why I have been specially fortunate in securing him, not only on account of his skill and eminence as an artist, but also by reason of his ideal qualification for this particular task. I shall always look back with the keenest of reminiscent pleasures to the days that we have spent together on the Cornish moors and the coastline. Several of the paintings and drawings here reproduced, including one or two Royal Academy pictures, were not made expressly for the book, and they do not in every case stand in close relation to the text, although they give typical aspects of the landscape and seascape of Cornwall.

It would seem ungrateful not to mention a third collaborator: a twin-cylinder motor-cycle and a side-car, without which we should not have been able to explore the less known parts of the county. This is the vehicle on which Simpson has travelled I don't know how many scores of thousands of miles, and a wonderful vehicle it is.

Finally, I have to express my gratitude to many worthy people, who have helped me in the preparation of my material and who have provided me with stories and documents.

London, May 9th, 1925.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	PREFACE	v
I	DOWN ALONG	1
II	LAND'S END	15
III	THE COASTLINE	31
IV	PENZANCE	49
V	ST. IVES AND FALMOUTH	71
VI	ACROSS THE MOORS: THE TAMAR TO TRURO	91
VII	ACROSS THE MOORS: WEST PENWITH WITH A DISCOURSE ON HURLING	111
VIII	CHARLES SANDOE GILBERT	127
IX	BORLASE AND THE DRUIDS	143
X	BEFORE HISTORY	163
XI	EARLY BRITONS	187
XII	ROMANCE AND REALITY	213
	EPILOGUE	239

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Colour

	FACING PAGE
The Herring Market, St. Ives	*Frontispiece*
The Pier, St. Ives	6
Morvah Church	12
Helford River	14
Stormy Weather: Porthmeor Beach	20
The Breakwater	34
Flushing	36
Farms by the Sea	40
Penzance: Masonic Lodge Mt. Sinai, No. 121	52
Herring Packers	56
Lamorna Quay	66
Skinning Dogfish: St. Ives	78
St. Michael Penkevil	80
The Road to Constantine	86
Mylor Church	90
Greystone Bridge	96
The Cornish Hills from Gunnislake	98
The South Gate: Launceston	100
Carn Brea	114
Flight of Curlew: Twilight	116
Carn Galver	118
The White Downs	124
Gweek	132
A Farm near Morvah	140
Lanyon Quoit	172
Goss Moor	194
The Summit of Carn Galver	198
Chysauster	206
A Cornish Nocturne	216
Helford	236

PAGE

Monochrome

Old Cottage in Helford 8
Seagulls Nesting 26
Duck Shooting 44
Black Backed Gulls 46
A Flight of Duck 82
Dosmary Pool 104
A Farm near Chûn 122
Trink Hill: Near St. Ives 130
Horse Bridge 138
Tresillian 156
Mulfra Cromlech 160
Chûn Cromlech 168
Bridge Between Lamorran and Ruan 218
Luckett Station: Ruins of Mine 222
Thatched Cottage in Constantine 232

In The Text

Lamorna: Mr. Birch's House on the Skyline 4
St. Just 7
Ruan Lanihorne 9
Luxulian Church 12
Land's End 18
Sennen Cove 22
A Country Lane: St. Buryan in the Distance . . . 25
Buryan Races 29
Gribben Head 33
Bude 35
Hell's Mouth 37
Padstow 40
The Headland: Newquay 41
Par Harbour 45
Clay Dumps 47

PAGE

Seagulls on the Cliffs 52
A South-Wester in Mount's Bay 55
Newlyn 59
Mousehole 63
Penzance 67
Falmouth Harbour 74
A Woodland Road Near the Fal 77
On the Fal near Lamorran 82
King Harry Passage From the Chain Ferry 84
Restronguet Creek 89
Looking West From Dosmary Pool: Hawkstor . . . 95
Kit Hill 96
Launceston 99
Bolventor 101
Painters' Huts: Dosmary Pool 103
St. Blazey 106
Lostwithiel 107
Truro 109
A Fox on Carn Kenidjack 114
A Curlew on the Moorland 116
Ponies on the Moors: Kit Hill 133
An Old Tin Mine: Sunset 136
A Relic of Early Christianity 139
Stone Basin at Chysauster 147
Chûn Castle 151
Mulfra Hill 154
Burial Mounds 159
Map of Prehistoric Remains 166
Zennor Quoit 169
Zennor Quoit in 1750 171
Boscawen Circle 175
Boskednan Circle 178
The Blind Fiddler 180
Plans of the Mên-an-Toi 182

PAGE

THE MÊN-AN-TOL 183
THE LOGAN ROCK ON TRERYN DINAS 190
THE IRON GATEWAY: CHÛN CASTLE 193
PLAN OF CHÛN CASTLE 195
THE DEFENCES ON TRERYN DINAS 200
IN THE ANCIENT VILLAGE: CHYSAUSTER 201
HUT CIRCLES AT BODRIFTY 202
POSITION OF CHYSAUSTER 204
DIAGRAM OF HUT-CLUSTER: CHYSAUSTER 205
THE SOUTERRAIN AT CARN EUNY 207
PLAN OF THE SOUTERRAIN AT CARN EUNY 208
THE MÊN SCRYFA 210
PIT DWELLINGS ON MULFRA 211
GURNARD'S HEAD 217
CAMBORNE 222
ON THE CORNISH COAST 225
SUNSET 229
TAILPIECE 237

NOTE

The pictures entitled "The South Gate, Launceston," "Black Backed Gulls," "Lamorna Quay," and "Skinning Dogfish," are reproduced by kind permission of their respective owners, Lt.-Comm. Norman Whitehead, R.N., Ernest Hatton, Esq., W. H. Lane, Esq., and A. W. Robinson, Esq.

DOWN ALONG

"Vertue of the Frock, quoth Fryar Jhon, what kind of a Voyage are we making?"

RABELAIS.

PUBLIC
DEPTFORD
LIBRARIES

Chapter I

Down Along

AT half-past ten every weekday morning, " Powderham Castle " or " Princess Mary " or some other magnificent and monstrous engine emits a thunderous puff as she begins to draw her load of five hundred rolling tons out of Paddington Station. Barring mischance, she will continue to puff until, with a train somewhat reduced by the slipping of coaches *en courant*, she booms down into North Road, Plymouth. This is a glorious performance, not less glorious because it is accomplished almost daily and without the least ostentation. Two hundred and twenty-six miles of track are covered in little over four hours.

But, apart from this unobtrusive maintenance of a world's record, discouraging our admiration by its very regularity and faultlessness, the " Cornish Riviera " is no ordinary train. Your sensations as you step on board, with a ticket for Penzance, are not unlike those with which you ascend the slippery gangway of a liner: you feel that you are taking the first step on the highway of adventure; that you are going to remove yourself to a great distance from the things with which you have become bored and over-familiar—the things which make up your wearisome, workaday life. You are not mistaken. True distance, in this sense, is not a matter of mere mileage. It is possible to travel bodily in time as well as in space, to move in the chronological as well as in the geographical meaning of the word. In Cornwall you are in

touch with ancient things, and with strange memories, with a people whose thoughts and visions are marvellously remote from those of the crowded populace.

No ordinary train: no ordinary journey. You start beneath the smoky glass and hideous iron tracery of Paddington; in less than six hours you are in the midst of a land

LAMORNA: MR. BIRCH'S HOUSE ON THE SKYLINE

of mystery; a land so beautiful and so alluring that the love of it and the longing for it will remain with you always.

Look at the passengers. They, too, are out of the ordinary. There is my cheery friend, John Birch—"Lamorna Birch"—dispensing traveller's hospitality with a persuasiveness that is quite irresistible. Here is a group of chirpy young women, of the type that grows so freely on camp stools—recruits for

the Academy of Mr. Stanhope Forbes at Newlyn. Here are sailors bound for the western ports : observe also those downy boys in knickerbockers, who carry bags of well-polished golf-clubs ; and see !—there are quite a number of " intellectuals," horn-rimmed spectacles and all. Notice that gentleman who looks as though he was something between a stage-manager and a brigand, with black hat, and black cloak fastened with a great silver brooch : you would not think that he was a clergyman, would you ? Taking it all round, it strikes you as a jolly, companionable train-load.

A writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, duly inspired by the glory of his subject, has written : " No county in England has a stronger individuality than Cornwall, whether in economic or social conditions, in history, nomenclature, tradition, or even in the physical characteristics of the land." That is true enough. The individuality of Cornwall does not consist of a few irregularities, a selection of peculiar features, or a casual discrepancy ; it is something which extends to and embraces the entire county, and to some degree overflows its borders ; something which you find in the people, in the landscape, in the rocks, the ancient stones, the dark valleys—in the very air. " Our air," says old Dr. Borlase, writing in 1750, " it must be allowed, is very salt, and its influences upon tender, squalid, and neglected habits proportionably fretting and acrimonious." And Richard Carew, that delightful and polished writer, in his *Survey of Cornwall*, published in 1602, wrote : " Touching the temperature of Cornwall, the air thereof is cleansed, as with bellows, by the billows, and flowing and ebbing of the sea, and therethrough becometh pure and subtle, and, by consequence, healthful ; so as the

inhabitants do seldom take a ruthful and reaving experience of those harms, which infectious diseases use to carry with them." While Norden, an equally graceful and mellifluous writer, said : " The sea's saltness sendeth warm evaporations, which cherish the earth as with a continual sweet dew, which yield to the earth's increase quick maturity, and prevents the bitterness of the nipping frost, which cannot long continue violent, nor the most continuing fall of the thickening snow make a dangerous deepness to remain long." Dr. Borlase lived at Ludgvan, near Penzance, where the climate is anything but " fretting and acrimonious." He may have had in mind the more bracing conditions of the northern coast. Norden is nearer the mark with his " warm evaporations " and " sweet dew."

In Cornwall you find what, in these days of enlightenment and sophistication, you do not find everywhere—a real peasantry. The Cornish peasant has a bluntness and a restful depth of ignorance which make him an appropriate and interesting figure in his own strange surroundings. In some respects he has a Mid-African simplicity. His presence helps you to realize that you have travelled into a far and unfamiliar land. He shows an agreeable blend of those physical and mental characters which people of refinement expect to find in " natives." You discover in him the embodiment of something which, until you met him, you imagined could only exist in the theatre, or in books written by authors who are determined to be humorous at all costs. As an urbanite in search of new stimuli, you are doubtless charmed. You indulge in curiosity and patronage. But the Cornishman, like that shy and shrewd fellow, the Vedda, has a way of

ST. IVES PIER.

adapting himself to the fancy of strangers. He is not incapable of acting—even of over-acting—the part which your attitude encourages him to play, of cloaking himself with the taciturnity or drollery which he considers fitted to the occasion. This desire to accommodate the visitor is found naturally in the more frequented places to which the mere excursionist is led by his guides; in the little stone cottages on the moors you will find the untainted aboriginal.

ST. JUST

A strange people; capable of the noblest and most gracious actions; capable, a century ago, of hammering to death the poor shipwrecked souls who clambered up over the rocks; capable of killing each other for the possession of a keg of brandy.

One of the finest of all manly exercises, the ancient game of "hurling"—too fast and too furious, alas, for the enfeebled generations of to-day!—was evolved in Cornwall. (Of this game I shall have something to say hereafter). It was more

than a mere exercise ; it was a test of manhood, of courage and honour, of strength and strategy, and it showed Cornishmen at their best. The revival of hurling on the grand scale, " hurling to the country," would help to restore to the Cornish character much of its former vigour and hardihood (without its brutality), qualities which are threatened to-day by the unretarded development of certain imported schisms.

If you are interested in folk-lore, you will have heard, or read, of the fire festivals of Cornwall. You know that the people used to decorate their doors on May Day with " green boughs of sycamore and hawthorn," and that they stuck large cuttings of trees into the ground in front of their houses. You need not be told that these practices were survivals of pagan fertility-cults ; but you may not know that rather similar practices are still to be seen, not sheepishly enacted, but in full vigour ; and you may not have realized the significance of this long lingering of heathendom.

Even at the present day, medicine magic is practised in Cornwall, though " boussening," I believe, is extinct. Do you know what boussening was ? It was a cure for madness or melancholy. The patient was placed " on the brink of a square pool, filled with water which came from St. Nun's well. The patient having no intimation of what was intended was, by a sudden blow on the breast, tumbled into the pool, where he was tossed up and down by some persons of superior strength, till being quite debilitated, his fury forsook him ; he was then carried to the church, and certain masses sung over him ; if he was not cured at once, the immersion was repeated." And they used to cure colic in Towednack by making you stand on your head for a quarter of an hour.

I am going to tell you more about the Cornish people in a later chapter: my purpose in this introduction or prelude is to make you understand that your excursion to Cornwall is something altogether out of the ordinary. You are not travelling in the mild and milky shires of Saxon England.

RUAN LANIHORNE

You are dealing with folk who still show the ruggedness of ancient heathendom; a ruggedness that pushes to the surface like the extruding masses of granite that give an austere and menacing character to the Cornish moorland.

But do not fear for your comfort. Cornish hotels and Cornish lodging-houses are just as good as any others. Carew wrote at the beginning of the seventeenth century: "Of all manner of vermin, Cornish houses are most pestered with

rats, a brood very hurtful for devouring of meat, clothes, and writings by day; and alike cumbersome through their crying and rattling, while they dance their gallop gallyards in the roof at night." And he goes on, to the no small indignation of his editor: "Strangers, at their first coming into the western parts, do complain that they are visited with the slow six-legged walkers, and yet the cleanly homeborn find no such annoyance. It may proceed from some lurking natural effect of the climate." What nonsense! cries the infuriated editor; and what has climate to do with it, anyhow? But have no fear of rats or fleas, or of anything of a like nature, for times have changed since Carew wrote. One of the chiefest delights of the county is, that you may live in absolute comfort, and then, walking but a little way from your lodgment find yourself amidst the truly primitive.

It is curious that the native language of Cornwall, a language closely related to the other Celtic dialects, should have passed so completely into the limbo of dead tongues: a mere amusement, now, for cultured dilettanti or for people who fancy themselves as Celtophils. The Welsh and Irish variants have made a far sturdier stand. Even in the late sixteenth century we find that "Most of the inhabitants can speak no word of Cornish, but very few are ignorant of the English; and yet some so affect their own, as to a stranger they will not speak it; for if meeting them by chance you inquire the way, or any such matter, your answer shall be, 'Meea navidna caw zasawzneck,' 'I can speak no Saxonage.'" Before the end of the eighteenth century, "Saxonage" was completely triumphant. At the present time there is scarcely a word of the ancient language in common use, though we

have a debased pronunciation of English and a number of local idioms which furnish material enough for those who resort to the abomination of writing "in dialect." I have used a typically Cornish expression, I admit, for the heading to this chapter; but as it serves well to announce the *motif* of the prelude, and consists of only two words, I may be excused for employing it.

Geographically and geologically there is nothing else in the world which resembles this peninsula. Here, through masses of primeval sediment, the crystalline rocks have thrust upward from the fiery heart of the earth. No coastal scenery is more truly sublime, from the dark, slaty bulk of Tintagel to the granite wall of Penwith and the variegated, polished serpentines of the Lizard. No moorland is more romantic, more grandly desolate, than the Bodmin moors; or more mysterious, more thickly peopled with the phantoms of legend, than the hills near Land's End.

It is difficult to write of Cornwall without falling into the rhapsodic style; difficult to think of her without an amorous distortion of thought. Old gentlemen have lost both their heads and their grammar in discoursing of this wonderful land: I must have a care lest I should follow their example.

But I am saved through these admirable pictures by Charles Simpson. He has done for this book, in the proper and skilful exercise of his art, what less happy authors have striven to do with their frenzied pens. Simpson knows Cornwall. His work is the outcome of years of familiarity with the Cornish landscape; and I doubt whether, in the past fifteen years of his life in Cornwall, he has spent more than

three consecutive hours under a roof, except for the purpose of sleeping. Years ago, it was an ordinary, though marvellous sight to see him with a great canvas tied to his back, and a load of painting equipment besides, half walking and half in flight, as it seemed, across the windy moors. To-day he fills a "Matchless" side-car with his artistic baggage, and thus traverses Cornwall from end to end. No other artist knows the county better than he does, and he knows it, not only

LUXULIAN CHURCH

as a painter, but as an ardent naturalist: proof of which you have in his delightful pictures and drawings.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that the literature dealing with Cornwall should exceed, in sheer bulk, that which has been inspired by any other part of our English territory. Historians, poets, engineers, novelists, topographers, antiquaries—look on the shelves of Mr. Bridger in Penzance, and judge for yourself. It is a vast literature. From the stately prose of the

Dunwich Church

later Elizabethans to the disjointed twaddle of the modern guide-book; from Quiller-Couch's exquisite fiction to the sentimentalities of Mr. — you have a range of infinitely varied works; some of them ranking with the best of our literature, and some of them not good enough for a parish magazine. Some are wretchedly illustrated; and, in others, the author's photographs are of much greater value than his text. But he who writes on a given theme, if he takes on himself to judge those who have written before him, very soon discovers the perils and inconveniences which befall the tenant of a glass house. Yet I think that no intelligent and tolerant reviewer can object to a protest against certain types of books which, I am sure, we must hold in mutual abhorrence: I mean, those books in which we are told that "Mrs. Trewiggin, her best apron tied about her portly figure, brought us two eggs which were just done to a nicety," or "The painter smiled as he turned away and walked up the little grey street in the soft twilight," or again "Nature, our great-grandmother, seemed to be wide awake that morning: every bee was buzzing, and every birdie was tuning his pipe." These are not textual quotations, but they are quotations of style, and they will probably suggest some half-dozen books to your mind—books that you give to your aunt for a Christmas present. The first belongs to the little-gentleman-on-his-travels category, the second to the tea-in-the-parlour school, the third to the knickerbocker-cum-muffler variety. I protest against such books, not because I think that no provision should be made for your aunt's Christmas needs, or because of the inherent badness of such styles, but simply because of the unseemliness of this kind of drivel in books which profess seriously to give

you a true and readable account of the country and its inhabitants. Mind you, I make no such profession.

The best of Cornwall must remain unknown for those who are unable to walk or cannot be induced to make the necessary effort. Not that you would be well advised to turn aside from the highway whenever you see an inviting footpath. Far from it. Roads are made with some regard for gradients, while footpaths plunge into deep vales and pass over exhausting hill-tops. But you must be prepared for some rough walking, and for climbing too, if you want to realize the full beauty of the moors, the cliffs, and the wooded coombs. The traces of ancient man—burial places, longstones, circles, and prehistoric villages—so abundant in Cornwall and of such penetrating interest, are concealed, for the most part, from those who cannot digress from the road. It is as well, however, whether starting on foot or on wheels, to keep to the main road as far as you can, avoiding any short cut with which you are not familiar, until you have reached the area that you wish to explore.

More shall be said of walking when we come to speak of the moorland : it is on the moors and the rocky coastline, in the creeks and dingles, that you will find Unknown Cornwall.

LAND'S END

" In the South remains a burning fire, in the East a void,
In the West a world of raging Waters."

WILLIAM BLAKE.

Chapter II

Land's End

IF any part of Cornwall is ostensibly well known, it is certainly the Land's End, and I may be blamed for giving it topographical precedence—starting at the wrong end, as it were. But there are different ways of knowing a place. The London known to a book-maker's tout is not, thank goodness, the London that you and I know. The Land's End viewed by the occasional tripper is not the Land's End known to those who are more familiar with its topography and associations. And there is something to be said for a scheme which passes from the better to the less known ; a scheme which leads the reader through easy stages of initiation up to the full revelation of the unknown and the marvellous.

When I was at lunch a few days ago, I overheard the following conversation :

" We had such a jolly time at Penzance last week : quite a decent hotel, you know. And we went right down to Land's End."

" My dear ! did you really ? And *did* you see the First and Last Inn, or whatever they call it ? "

" Yes, rather ! Isn't it too quaint for words ? "

After this, the talk led on to a discussion of the relative merits of certain hotels and golf links. That is the tripper point of view. Your attention is claimed momentarily by something with a " quaint " name by the roadside, something that catches your eye as you pass on eagerly to your tea

of cream and splits at the next hotel. To you, my good tripper, the Land's End is well known, I admit : it is a place where there are two hotels ; one is a temperance hotel and one is not. It is a place with a rough but convenient shelter for your car ; a place from which, you are told, the Scilly Islands are clearly discernible—but it was hazy, and you

LAND'S END

didn't see them. And back you go to your after-dinner walk on the Penzance promenade, where, meeting a friend from Bloomsbury, you discuss the prospects of your cretonne department. You may be a very worthy person, but I submit that, although you have indeed been to the Land's End, you know very little about it.

The road from Penzance to the end of the peninsula has been described with a patient sameness in book after book. You are told how it goes up and down, how dangerous the

curves are, how there is a cross in the hedge here and a long-stone there, how it passes the frowning eminence of Carn Brea and the neglected burying-ground of the Quakers, how you may see the stone dinner-table of the seven kings at Sennen and what a fine view meets you on the last half-mile. Nothing more need be said.

Following the footpath northwards from the Land's End for a little over half a mile, passing on your left the barely visible traces of an ancient fortress, you reach Mayon Cliff, whence you look down on the coastguard station, the lifeboat slip, and the clustering houses of Sennen Cove. Whitesand Bay lies before you, with its long sweep of yellow beach (if it is low water) curving towards Aire Point ; on this beach the keels of the Danish raiders ploughed their furrows a thousand years ago ; and here, in 1497, that brave impostor, Perkin Warbeck, made his landing. Looking north, your view is bounded by the conical mass of Cape Cornwall, with an old engine-house chimney pointing from the top of it. Not far from the Cape, about three-quarters of a mile from the mainland, rise the terrible rocks of the Brisons ; rocks of a menacing aspect, even in the fairest and sunniest weather ; rocks of sinister repute, with a black record of shipwreck and death.

Before we turn our backs on Cape Cornwall and Whitesand Bay, I must tell you the story of the Pirate of Sennen : one of the best stories that have ever been told of a wicked hero.

Many years ago, the farmers and fishermen of the district, their day's work over, were enjoying the mellow tranquillity of an autumn evening. Round about the homesteads of

Ballowal, Hendra, Nanjulian, and Escalls Green the good folk, with their wives and youngsters, looked out over the sheeny ocean, watching a few luggers moving slowly against the tide towards Sennen Cove. In the Cove itself, men were discussing the prospects of a good day's fishing on the morrow ; one or two were carrying nets and tackle towards their stranded boats. Suddenly there was a stir ; then a commotion. A large square-rigged ship, obviously a foreigner, swung into sight from behind Cape Cornwall and drifted into the bay. She was a dark, sinister-looking craft, with a sound of angry voices on board, plainly heard over the calm evening waters, and two rows of cannon pushing their black noses from her flanks. Her sails hung flat from the yards, with an occasional tremulous wrinkling. Drifting rather than sailing, she rounded the Brisons, and stood in to the shore. Commotion became panic. " A pirate ! a pirate ! " said landsmen and sailors alike. " A pirate ! " squealed the terrified children as they scurried to sheltering doorways. " A pirate, the Lord help us ! " cried the women, with terrifying thoughts of pillage and bloodshed. So the folk scattered : some of the men went into their houses and took down old dusty muskets that hung below the rafters ; and others crawled on the cliffs, moving from boulder to boulder, keeping an eye on the ship.

Still, with a clamour of voices, the vessel drifted on ; then, sheaves whining and creaking, a boat was lowered, the crew cluttered aboard, and a man with iron chains about his hands and feet was flung into it. The boat was rowed with all speed towards the gully of Vellan Dreath, the prisoner's manacles were removed, and, as the boat grounded, he was forced overboard in the shallow water. Raving and roaring, the

STORMY WEATHER, PORTHMEOR BEACH.

man turned on his shipmates, but they beat at him and thrust him back with the looms of their oars, turned the boat's head seaward, and left him screaming outrageous blasphemies as he stood in the lacy, rippling surf. Having hoisted her boat on board, the ship put up her helm, the great mainsail filled with a breeze from the south, and she stood out for the open sea. The man turned towards the shore, where a thousand unseen and silent people were anxiously watching him, and then walked slowly up the beach.

That was how the pirate arrived. He was such an abominably wicked man that he was not considered fit company even for a shipful of murderers. Whether he terrorized the people, or whether he imposed upon them with plausible tales, or whether some of them took a liking to him, I do not know ; certain it is, that he acquired a cottage at Tregeseal, north of St. Just, above the little valley, and there he settled down to a career of atrocious wickedness.

He became a wrecker. There were many wreckers in Cornwall, but this man became a master-wrecker, a king of wreckers. On black, windy nights, he drove a horse with a lantern along the cliffs, luring ships to destruction and their crews to death. If sailors escaped the sea, he would brain them with a hatchet as they clung, exhausted, to the rocks, or would sever their hands, so that they dropped back into the raging waters. Scores of ships and hundreds of lives were destroyed by this diabolical man. It should be noted that, although everyone expressed his disapproval of this wicked neighbour, no one made the slightest attempt to hinder his operations. This kind of tolerance is a feature of the Cornish disposition ; it is extended to anyone, no matter how terrible his deeds,

provided always that he is not guilty of any infringement of a Cornish taboo—such as the performing of certain actions on a Sunday.

Years passed, and the pirate-wrecker became an old man. At last he lay dying and unattended in his cottage. It was harvest-time. A light breeze was blowing from the land, the tide was ebbing, reapers were at work in the fields. Then the

SENNEN COVE

breeze died away, and there came a sultry, brooding calm. But suddenly the reapers heard a rushing wind, and in the wind a voice—a wailing, articulate voice that passed over their heads and left the blood cold in their veins. The voice said " The hour has come, but the man has not come." Full of terror, the men looked seaward, and there saw a black, enormous ship, crashing with foaming bows against wind and against tide. There was so sign of a crew, no sound of voices.

It was a cloudless afternoon, bright though sultry; but moving with the black ship came a moving darkness, a horrible murky gloom, covering the sea with its shadow and reaching up into the sky like a pillar of fear. Ship and darkness moved in under Kenidjack Cliff; the black fog curled up over the brink of the land and wrapped the pirate's cottage in its awful coils. Reapers and tinners ceased work. They could hear the shrieks of the dying man: "Save me from the sailors with their bloody hands! Put them out! Save me from their bloody hands!"

The parson, a noted queller of devils, arrived dauntless on the scene, and he, with a doctor from St. Just and two stout-hearted fishermen, entered the cottage. They had need of their courage. At times the room was full of a thick blackness, so that they could scarcely see each other; at times they were half blinded by an intense brilliance. Moreover, although a hazy, golden calm brooded over the country-side, the cottage was filled with the noise of a stormy sea, of the heaving and beating of great surges. The doors rattled on their hinges, the windows shook. And there, in alternating glare and gloom, amid the multitudinous sound of roaring waters, the parson exorcized the devil and reduced him to the size of a fly. There was a rending crash, a wave of white fire; the four living men bolted from the cottage, and saw it wrapped closer and closer in the black whirling and writhing of the cloud. And then the unloosened darkness withdrew, passing seaward and hovering again over the ship. The bow of the ship turned to the west, and she drove out rapidly to sea, encircled by thunders and lightnings.

Here the story should end, but it goes on to tell us how

the neighbours entered the cottage, how they looked at the terrible body of the pirate, how they put it hastily in a coffin, and set off for the churchyard, followed by a black pig. When they got to the churchyard gate, another storm overtook them. The bearers dropped their load and ran inside the church for shelter. Looking from the porch, they saw the coffin lifted bodily from the ground and whirled, blazing and flashing, through the dark air.

It is a good story; though, stripped of the marvellous, the bare facts are, probably, that a successful wrecker of foreign extraction lived at Tregeseal and died of fright in a thunderstorm. The black pig represents a familiar element in folk-lore. I must point out that there is a certain resemblance between the main outlines of this story and the history of "Cruel Coppinger," a wrecker and smuggler of Morwenstow; for Coppinger, like the pirate, came up out of the sea, and after a murderous and terrible career was carried away in a strange ship to an unknown destination.

A little to the south of the Land's End, is the long, isolated rock of the Armed Knight. It is a granite outlier that has withstood the tempests of the ages, its elongated form, pointing seaward, being well adapted to resist direct onslaught. Norden tells us of a fabulous magnetic stone found on this rock "which will attract iron." Equally strange is the legend of a "stone figure of a man" which appears to have stood upright on the rock (or was it on the Land's End itself?), and which fell in a great storm on January 30th, 1649—the day of the beheading of King Charles. On the very same day, and in the very same storm, a ship with the royal wardrobe and furniture

A COUNTRY LANE: ST. BURYAN IN THE DISTANCE

on board broke from her moorings off St. Ives and drove onto the rocks of Godrevy, where she was totally wrecked, with the loss of some sixty men—practically the entire crew. Probably the "stone figure" was an upstanding natural column of granite, like that which tops the promontory of Treryn.

Enys Dodman is another rocky islet, close in under the cliffs, white and clamorous with myriads of sea-birds.

The Greeb fields are not far from the edge of the cliffs: in one of those fields may be found innumerable flint "cores" and "cones," with flakes and implements—evidence of human occupation in the New Stone Age.

A footpath leads from the Greeb to the rocky shores of Nanjizal Bay. Here are the precipitous places of Zawn Reeth and the Diamond Horse, and the boulders of Carn Cravah. It is a bay paved with immense, smooth boulders and ringed with menacing cliffs; no ship caught within its jaws in a southerly or westerly gale has a ghost of a chance. The last wreck that I saw there was that of the *City of Cardiff*, and she was pounded into a mass of crumpled iron by succeeding storms.

Descriptions of churches do not come within the scope of this book, the aim of which is to exhibit the less familiar but not less typical aspects of Cornwall and of Cornish history, life, and character. But it may be that the insides of churches are less well known than the outsides. At any rate, before leaving the district of the Land's End, I cannot forbear entering the church of St. Buryan, to offer my most reverent respects to poor Clarice of Bolleit, dead these seven centuries or more.

SEAGULLS NESTING

St. Buryan church stands conspicuously on a cultivated plateau, in the midst of a clustering village. It is a finely proportioned church, with a villainously discordant interior; near it are two remarkably good specimens of the Cornish cross. It stands on, or near, one of the most ancient Christian foundations in the realm, for the original collegiate church was built and endowed by Athelstan, that pious and puissant king, about the year 930, after his victories over the West Countrymen and their Danish allies. The ecclesiastical establishment here consisted of canons, priests and prebendaries, good churchmen all, and vowed to celibacy. But there were squabbles and jealousies in later times, and when John Grandisson, Bishop of Exeter, paid his spectacular visit to West Penwith in 1336 he had occasion to rebuke certain unruly deans of St. Buryan and their partisans.

And Clarice—sweet forgotten Christian lady!—how many see her tomb, and give her the little prayer that she asks for? Poor Clarice! How great must be her distress if she can see the unforgivably ugly and tasteless things that surround her resting place; so different from the Norman austerity that she was accustomed to. The inscription on her tomb has been heedlessly transcribed in most of the many books on Cornwall; but as the transcript is generally incorrect, and as there is something so strangely touching in its simplicity and in the seriousness of its appeal, I shall give it here, as I have myself copied it from the stone: CLARICE : LA : FEMME : CHEFFREI : DE : BOLLEIT : GIT : ICI : DIV : LALME : EIT : MERCE : KE : PVR : LEALME : PIVNT : DI : IOR : DE : PARDVN : AVEVND. "Clarice the wife of Geoffrey of Boleigh lieth here: may God have mercy on her soul. Whoso prayeth for her soul

shall have a ten days' pardon." The history of Clarice, as far as I am aware, is almost unknown. I have only come across one brief mention of her, in Gough's *Camden*, to the effect that " this Clarice . . . wife of Geffrey de Bullen held a manor in this parish in the reign of Henry III." Boleigh is the name of a hamlet near the edge of the Lamorna valley, about a mile and a half away—the alleged site of one of Athelstan's bloodiest battles. Who was Geoffrey of Boleigh ? We have no clue : certainly there is no connection whatever between this ancient Norman family of Boleigh and the relatively modern name of Bolitho.

You may say that all this is mere sentiment ; that Clarice may have been a shrew, a wanton, a thriftless and slovenly housewife, an ugly old villain, a flighty, gaudy and worthless creature. Perhaps you have reason on your side ; but for me there is something that is strangely arresting in the pathetic abandonment and the present incongruity of that tomb and its unheeded appeal : something that evokes a feeling of mingled friendliness and reverence.

St. Buryan is less celebrated locally for its collegiate church and its Norman tomb than for its annual race meeting. In the fields of Buryan, large crowds gather to see this joyous, informal affair ; the races may not be run on severely orthodox lines, but that makes it all the jollier. Good humour and loud hilarity and a keen personal interest in the events characterize the onlookers, neither is there a lack of bold horsemen or of sturdy mounts. Rough coated ponies and donkeys are ridden and driven ; best of all, perhaps, is the race of donkey-carts, in which every man urges his animal with fierce cries, with rattles, or with the blaring of a horn, as he thinks fit.

ST. BURYAN RACES

THE COASTLINE

" If the curvatures in the northern and southern coasts of Cornwall are estimated, four parts in five of the outline of the county may be said to be exposed to the sea, and to partake either immediately or mediately in all the advantages derivable from that useful element."

C. S. GILBERT.

GRIBBEN HEAD

Chapter III

The Coastline

THE boundaries of Cornwall, generally speaking, are water-boundaries. Her eastern frontier is the Tamar, save for a few loops and angles ; and the southern line of what I term the Devonshire salient is formed by another river—the Ottery. But her great natural boundary is the sea. Cornwall has the longest coastline of any English county (there are something like 245 miles of it) ; the longest and the most beautiful and most varied coastline.

It may be that the appeal of the coast is less subtle than that of the moors. The sea in storm, with the clamour of falling surges and the whipping of white spray over the

boulders, fills you with thoughts which are hard, firm, distinct and cleanly cut, like rock. In calm weather, the sea invites you to play; in storm, challenges you to a tussle. There is no mistaking it.

I do not propose to take the Cornish coastline mile by mile. In the first place, I have never walked all round the coast from Marsland Mouth to Cawsand Bay (I doubt whether any one has), and, in the second place, such an elaborate and conscientious survey would be excessively tedious and quite out of keeping with the scheme of this book. Rather, I shall emulate the giant Bolster who took six or eight miles in his stride, and move from place to place, with such digressions and omissions as I shall think proper, and without the least pretensions to method.

The cliffs from Morwenstow to Boscastle are, for the most part, dark and slaty, deeply fissured, and with strangely bent and distorted layers. In places, the shallow strata present a variety of colours. At Bude, the contortion of these strata is amazing: layers are bent back on themselves, crushed, overfolded and mixed up in the most bewildering manner. Ledgy fringes extend seaward from the base of the cliffs—the general character of the coast as far as Hartland Point in Devon after which it becomes tamer in the mild recess of Bideford Bay.

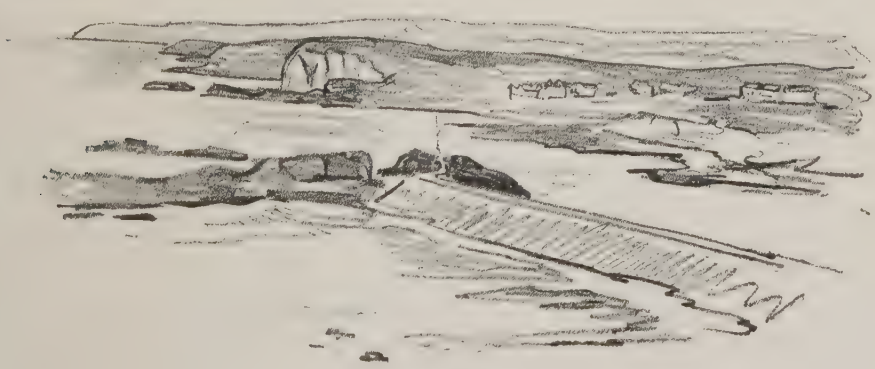
A hundred years ago, the people of Morwenstow were cruel wreckers. Ships that were driven ashore on the rocks and ledges of that iron coast found no assistance from the people who gathered so eagerly to watch them: it was, indeed, the particular desire of those people that the crews should perish, so that the picking of the wreck might be carried

THE BREAKWATER.

on without the interference of the owners. The idea of making any attempt to save life, even when such an attempt demanded no heroism, was treated with contemptuous ridicule.

A cruel coast in truth. We have grim stories of Parson Hawker and his man gathering basketfuls of horrible "gobbets" on the wreck-strewn beaches; stories of sea-mutilations and of nameless burials.

At Bude, the edge of the coast is less precipitous, the shores more sandy and level, but from Compass Point to Widemouth



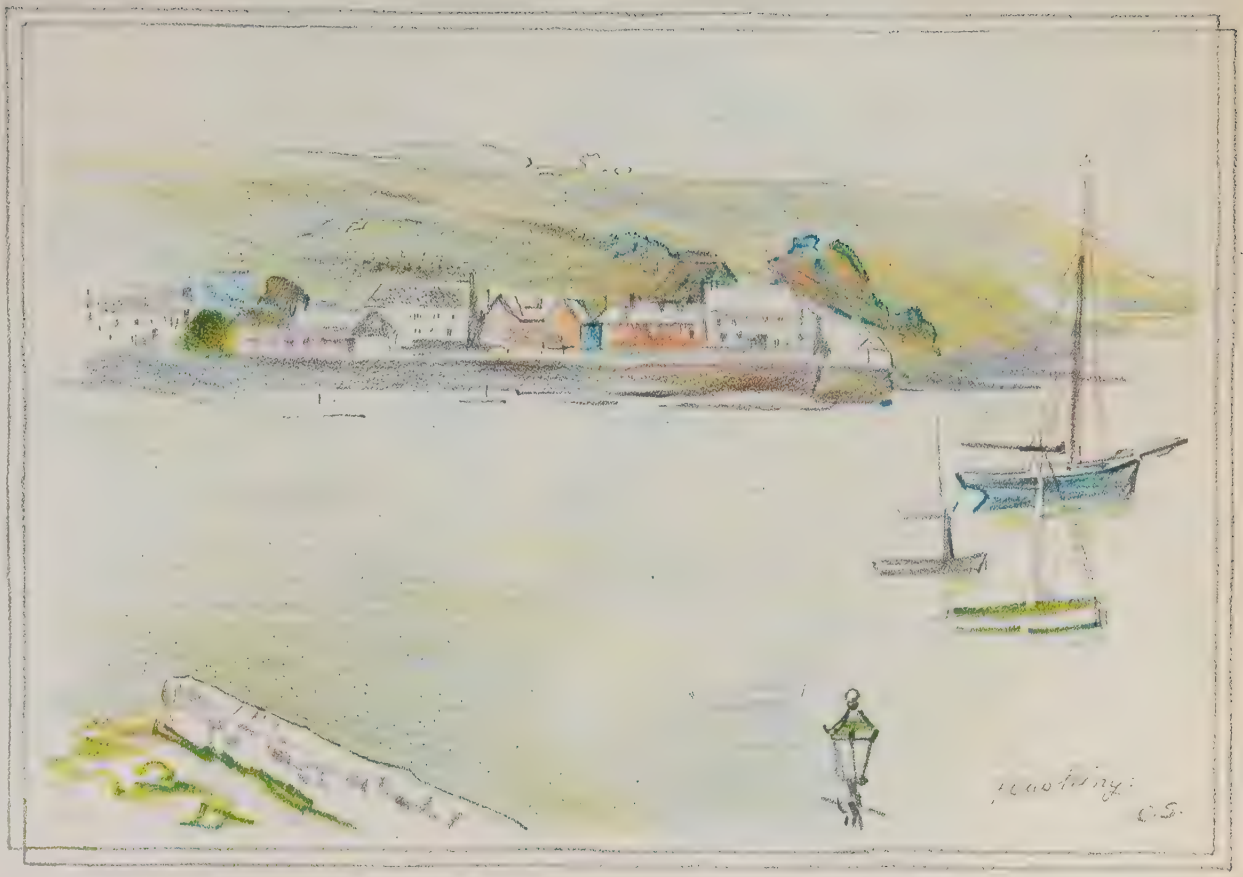
BUDE

Sand the shelves and ledges push out into the smother of the westerly gales. Heaven knows how many fine ships and brave lives have been lost on that northerly curve of the coast from Boscastle to Hartland. Heaven knows what the centuries have seen there of greed and savagery. In old days the "rights of wreck" were nominally the legal perquisites of princes and corporations; but the true "rights of wreck" were those of the men on the spot. The Cornish Vice-admirals have been censured for their lack of vigilance, their failure to

show authority, if not for their actual participation in lawlessness ; but with such a coastline and such fierce and rapacious people it is difficult to see what could have been accomplished, in those good old days, even by men of unquestionable honesty and resolution. Commissioners did sometimes intervene. A few daring fellows, now and then, would try to put in a word for law and order. What happened ? They were routed, not only by the snarling mob, but by the gentlemen of the district, who, with dammes ! and threats elegant and inelegant, drew their swords and would brook no interference. Those who were shipwrecked in the seventeenth century would doubtless have preferred the Algerine coast to the shores of Cornwall.

Within a hundred years of our time, the murderous horrors of wrecking were still in existence in the west of Britain, on the Welsh and Irish coastlines, but principally in Cornwall. Hardly credible, yet true. At the present day we have no inkling of any such thing ; and even if it is possible to buy cigarettes and silk at an amazingly low price—never mind where—just after a big liner has run aground—never mind where either !—still, a ship in distress is an object which excites the humane emotions, not those of predatory assassins. And I would not have you say that this change has been brought about entirely by the efficiency of our coastguard system, by improved communications, by the work and example of the lifeboat, by new aids to the navigator, or by the disintegration of the native Cornish stock : it has been brought about to some extent by these things, but mainly by the growth of a true and civilized humanity.

I remember a furious southerly gale, a good many years ago, which drove a terrible sea full into Mount's Bay. It



HELL'S MOUTH

was one of those gales which, however frequently they occur, are always described as "the worst within memory." As the morning wore on, the fury of the storm increased, and we in Newlyn were roused to excitement by the crash of the lifeboat rockets—the signal to launch the boat. We heard that a sailing ship had been blown inside the Bay, and we knew that she must inevitably become a wreck. In those days the lifeboat house at Penlee had not been built, and the boat was launched from Newlyn. As we ran along the road to Mousehole we could see the lifeboat heading out slowly over the rolling seas, lost to sight when she slid down between the moving ridges of water. Two Lowestoft drifters whistled up their crews and stood out to sea, sturdy craft, ready to help with the rescue or to make a bid for salvage. Then the ship drove in sight, lurching under bare poles across the Bay, alternately lifted high on the crest of the seas and pitched heavily down into the trough, so that we could only see her three staggering mastheads. She was the Italian barque *Saluto*. The lifeboat took off every man of the crew without mishap: never had we seen a more thrilling or more courageous work of rescue. The ship ran on to the rocks about a mile south-east of Marazion, near Basore Point.

Another time it was the *Étoile Polaire* of Fécamp, a fine white-hulled iron barque that was driven into the Bay on a stormy Sunday morning. It was high tide when the lifeboat reached her, and the crew determined to save the ship as well as the men on board. In spite of the extreme danger of the proceeding, and the difficulty of making themselves understood by the Frenchmen, the lifeboat crew boarded the ship and took charge of her. By superb seamanship, they ran her between

the pier-heads at Newlyn (a narrow and dangerous entrance in a storm), and, though a bow anchor was dropped by the excited people on the forecastle through a misunderstanding, she was safely berthed. It was on this occasion, if I remember rightly, that the Salvation Army, grasping the emotional value of the scene with a fine and happy instinct, held a thanksgiving at the landward end of the pier.

Yes ; things have indeed changed since the days of the wreckers. But I cannot refrain from giving you the story of a certain nameless and unofficial lifeboat—a story of recent years. This boat was launched gallantly one stormy day, and headed out for a vessel, which, though sorely buffeted, had not signalled for assistance. Now, according to this curious story, the crew of the vessel had been rescued some time previously by this very boat ; and, for some reason which I do not pretend to explain, they were exceedingly angry when they saw it approaching them, uninvited, for the second time. Briefly, they refused to be rescued. They refused in a very pointed way. They took long poles and forced the boat away from them ; it is even said that they made a show of weapons, and assumed the attitude of those who are about to repel an attack by pirates ; while, instead of complimenting the lifeboat crew on their bravery, they uttered the most discouraging imprecations and abuse. I cannot account for this peculiar and seemingly ungrateful conduct.

Perhaps the landsman does not always realize that, perilous though storms are, they are less perilous, as far as danger to shipping is concerned, than the cold, white, thick blinding fogs. In fogs, while the guns and wailing horns on the coast answer the bells and sirens of the ships, there is

the double danger of wreck and collision. The Cornish coast, thrust out as it is into the highways of ocean traffic, is a coast that traps many a ship in foggy weather. Men walking on the cliffs in such weather have heard engines pulsing below them in the dense whiteness, and have roared out a warning just in time.

The first creek on the north coast is that of the River Camel at Padstow: a pleasant sandy creek, but not offering

PADSTOW

many advantages to shipping. Coastwise craft find better accommodation at Newquay—a place which is strangely compounded of the picturesque and the pompous, but which is distinguished, in the minds of many, by the possession of the finest and largest hotels in Cornwall.

I cannot dwell on the beauties of Perran beach or on the majesty of St. Agnes' Head, with the Beacon hill rising behind it. There is a hole in the rocks, about a mile and a half south of the headland, into which the giant Bolster foolishly

Farms by the sea
near Bernards Head
C.S.

poured forth his life-blood, tricked by the persecuted St. Agnes—a "pattern woman of virtue."

This is not a guide-book, as I shall have occasion to remind you more than once, and I refuse to trudge along the coastline for your benefit crying "marvellous!" at each step. But this much may be said, as a concession to topographical

THE HEADLAND, NEWQUAY

demands; that the most superb coastal scenery in the Kingdom is that which is presented by the granite wall and the metamorphic rocks of West Penwith, from Clodgy Point in the north, round to Carn Du in the south; and again by the glistening cliffs between Mullion and the Lizard. In the Penwith area, you have an amazing diversity: you have boulder-strewn coves, approached by steep ravines or by relatively wide valleys; you have enormous masses of split and weathered

stone, piled and tumbled and crushed and worn—stern, ponderous masses, built up into forms which have inspired legends of the giants ; and you have rocky islands and ledges, always fringed by a ceaseless foaming and swirling of the sea.

Even on the calmest day in West Penwith, there is a murmuring, seething line at the edge of the rocks ; inland, a long unbroken sound of ocean thunder. The noise of London, heard from Hampstead Heath on a still evening, is like the noise of the Cornish sea, heard on a breathless day among the hills.

In the brooks that run down to the sea at Penberth and Lamorna, and in the comparatively large stream which rises somewhere near the Mên-an-Tol and comes down under the bridges at Newlyn, there are a certain number of shy but delicious trout. Fastidious men fish these streams with the dry fly, and a rarely dexterous proceeding it is. Those of us who are less particular, or less skilful, dangle dead blue-bottles between the ferns and brambles, well content with an occasional fish, and not discouraged by frequent entanglements and by the mishaps which are incident to the lazy method of down-stream angling. I do not know of any stream which is more difficult to fish, no matter what bait or method you employ, than the Penberth brook ; which is so narrow that you can step from bank to bank at one stride, and so overgrown that you are continually stooping and crawling. Yet there is a delight in these difficulties, and your little quarter-pounder is precious indeed when you whip him out triumphantly, or raise him with caution through the tangled briars.

Speaking of trout-fishing leads one on naturally to speak of shooting. The Cornish estuaries and marshes, the creeks

and islets, are good places for the gun. There is admirable duck shooting on the Fal at Ruan Lanihorne and elsewhere. There are duck also on most of the estuaries ; as, for example, at Hayle ; and abundance of curlew. I have (and I suppose it should be confessed with shame) shot duck on the open sea with a rifle. Snipe and woodcock are found on the moorland marshes, while plover and golden plover are frequently met with, both on moorland and cultivation. So also are curlew : difficult birds to approach inland, and not entirely satisfactory on the table.

As for the birds of the coast—the sea-birds—the Cornish coast is the coast *par excellence* for the study of their lives. The Scillies are famous breeding grounds, and legions of migrating birds pass along the shores of Cornwall on their way to these islands. At the approach of the breeding season you will see long lines of swiftly flying, skimming, dipping and dashing guillemots, razor-bills and puffins, passing at high speed just above the level of the water.

Perhaps the gannet is the most remarkable, the most spectacular of the Cornish sea-fowl. Simpson and I have spent whole hours on the cliffs watching gannets—those wonderful fish-hunters that shoot themselves downward, plumb, wings folded and tail vertical, striking the sea with a splash and thud like falling bombs. They say that the column of spray sent up by a plunging gannet can be seen a mile off. The bird sometimes ascends in spiral flight, like an aeroplane, until he gets the correct elevation ; then he poises for a second, shuts his great wings, and drops like a stone. When fishing in shallow water he shoots down obliquely, but sometimes miscalculates, strikes a rock head-on and breaks

his neck. The shock of impact, when the bird strikes into the water, is taken by air-cells under the skin. There are strange stories of gannets, lured by netted fish, plunging down into boats and driving their heads clean through the bottom boards, and even diving to death, under similar conditions, on dry land. They pursue all sorts of fish, with undiscriminating appetite, their diet including pollack, mackerel, herring, haddock, whiting, codling, sprats and pilchards. Gannets floating in a somnolent condition are easily run down by boats, and appear curiously indifferent to, or insensible of, danger. In very calm weather, or in the wallowing, smooth-backed seas of a ground swell, they are sometimes unable to rise from the surface of the water, and so perish miserably, able neither to feed nor to save themselves from the most obvious perils. Gannets do not breed in Cornwall—their nearest breeding grounds, I believe, are on Lundy Island at the entrance to the Bristol Channel and on Grasholm Island off the Pembrokeshire coast.

We have taken our rifles and shot the diving shags and cormorants, most voracious and destructive of all sea-fowl, for whose heads the fisheries used to offer a small reward. (It is not easy for those who are unfamiliar with these birds to distinguish the one from the other. The cormorant—*graculus carbo*—has fourteen tail feathers ; the shag—*graculus cristatus*—has only twelve). We have studied the circling and wheeling and sliding flight of the gulls, birds with whose movements and anatomy Simpson is so familiar. With our field-glasses we have observed the sand-pipers, oyster-catchers, dunlins, and sometimes curlew, moving on the grey and brown boulders of the foreshore : difficult to see with the unaided

DUCK SHOOTING

eye, but beautifully clear in the luminous field of a Zeiss. We have followed the movements of the great northern divers, autumn visitors in Mount's Bay, seldom in mature plumage.

PAR HARBOUR

Sea-gulls, black-backs, kittiwakes and herring gulls, flying or floating, are a part of every Cornish sea picture. You should behold them in Newlyn harbour, screaming and scuffling over the fishy horrors of the ebb, or rising in clamorous myriads when the blasting charges are fired in Gwavas quarry.

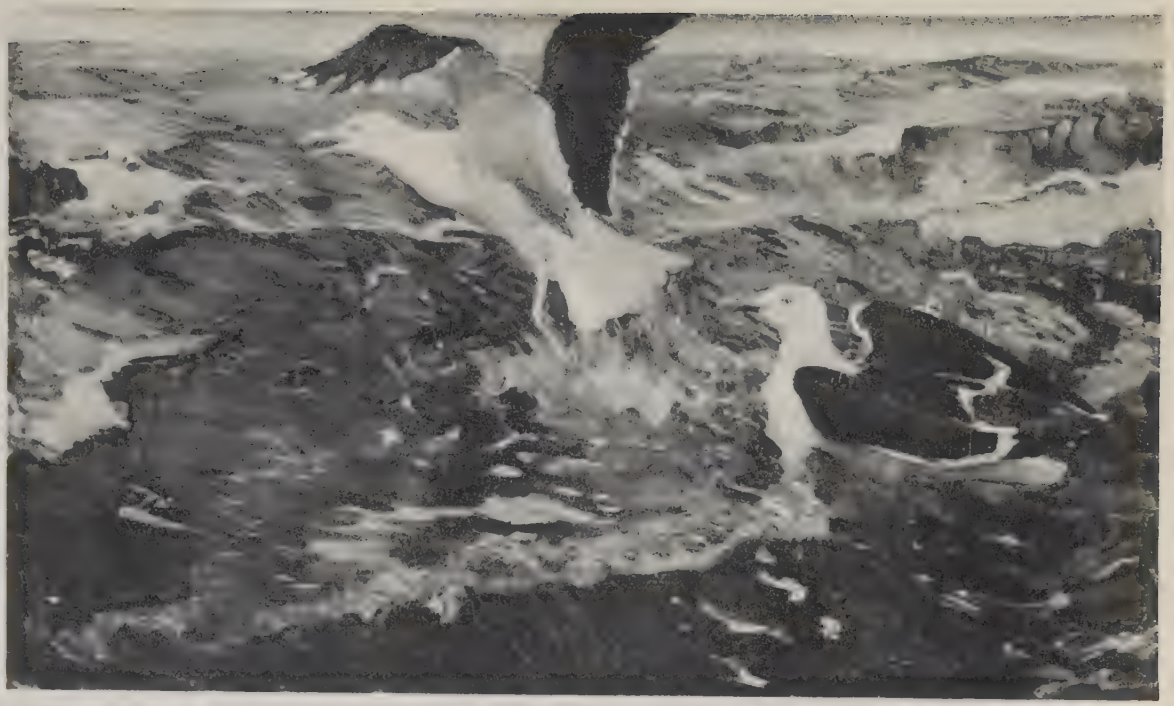
Associated with the Cornish gulls in the pilchard and mackerel seasons is that disgusting bird, the common skua.

He does not catch his own food, but waits until the gulls have grabbed their fill; whereupon he chases them with horrible cries and dreadful flappings, until, through sheer fright, they disgorge their prey. Of all unpleasing creatures, the skua surely excels in nastiness and low behaviour.

Small wonder that the grim Cornish coast should have its phantom terrors, its apparitions and omens; small wonder that the voices of the storm should strike fear into men's hearts, and that ghastly, nameless things should be seen among the surges.

Fishermen who walk the cliff paths or the beaches at night hear the drowned men "hailing their names," calling dismally from out of the dark waters. They hear a voice in the wind uttering those mystic words which we come across so often in the legends of the Cornish coast: "The hour has come, but the man has not come"—whereat a black figure hurries to the edge of the rocks and flings itself noiselessly into the darkness. They see white, shining ghosts moving on the sand at the very edge of the breaking waves. On the old stone piers and in the cobbled streets of the villages they meet the phantasms of the drowned, with seaweed and bits of drift-wood sticking in their wet hair; terrible phantasms, with open, silent mouths. I know those who have seen the "elemental" at St. Ives—a great bending and writhing apparition, ten or fifteen feet high, swaying and swinging along the Porthmeor beach in the moonlight.

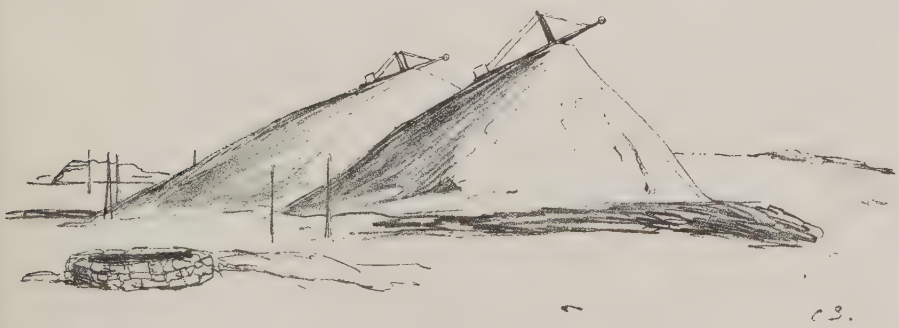
Phantom ships there are in plenty. Some of these, quitting their proper element, raise themselves from the sea and with ghostly sails full of a ghostly breeze pass inland over the



BLACK-BACKED GULLS

hills and the fields. Others, in spectral distress, have lured pilots and rescuers into the stormy night, vanishing suddenly at the touch of a boat-hook. Strangest of all, the story of a daylight phantom, plainly seen by mariners: a schooner with her crew on board, cheerily hailing the passing ships—the phantom of a well-known craft, notoriously a slow sailer, yet now overhauling her fellows and passing quickly from sight in the misty seas—while, at the very hour at which this schooner was seen and recognized by the Cornish sailors she was lying at the bottom of the Irish Sea, three hundred miles away; but the crew were saved in their boats.

You have never heard of the apparition of a steamship. Our sea ghosts are all wind-driven. Sailing ships belong to the age of romance, and I suppose that the ghost of a steamer would be as unlikely and unseemly a thing as the ghost of a railway engine or a phantasmal aeroplane.



CLAY DUMP

PENZANCE

" Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks towards Namancos and Bayona's hold."

MILTON.

Chapter IV

Penzance

IT may be argued that, in dealing with the comparatively unknown parts of the country, we should not say too much about the towns. But the town is an essential part of the countenance of the country ; and that is particularly true of market towns, and of all those which are not utterly given over to industrialism. Penzance is the port of arrival for those who are going to explore the most interesting parts of what some people romantically designate as the " hinterland " of West Penwith ; it is the base from which these pleasant operations are conducted ; and, moreover, in spite of its regrettable promenade, its arrogant hotels, its bandstand and its pavilion, it is as thoroughly and unmistakably Cornish as any village on the moors.

Penzance is not a town of great antiquity ; St. Ives takes precedence of it in ancient records ; and in mediæval times, Porth-Ennis, or Mousehole as it is now called (where a market was authorized by Edward I in 1292 and a quay for shipping was built a hundred years later), was by far the most important place in the district. Carew says : " Pensans, by interpretation the Saint's Head, is a market town, not so regardable for his substance, as memorable for his late accident of the Spaniards firing." Of the " Spaniards firing " more anon.

Market Jew Street, which runs up the slope from the station to the Market Hall (built in 1837), with its raised pavement and—on certain days—its park of rural vehicles,

has unmistakable character. The Market Hall is not devoid of architectural merit; the statue of Sir Humphry Davy, which stands below it, is not devoid of such dignity as the statues of the eminent may be allowed to possess; but the

SEAGULLS ON THE CLIFFS

effect of both is ruined by certain urban conveniences which are set up just below them. A typically Cornish street.

In this street, by the way, is one of the best book-shops that you will find in the West Country: Bridger's Library. Here is a collection of topographical works, engravings and drawings, which is of prime interest; and here, too, is an

C S
Masonic Lodge · Renyance

assortment of ancient and modern books among which I have occasionally discovered veritable treasures.

The Morrab Library, situated in the Gardens of that name, and founded in 1818, has a really first-rate collection of Cornish and general literature. It is a subscription library, and if you are staying in the place for any time you will be well advised to join it.

Perhaps the best view of Penzance is that which you get by walking along the Albert Pier, which forms the eastern side of the harbour, and looking up towards St. Mary's Church. The harbour itself is oozy and nauseous at low water, full of ill-favoured and grimy vessels, with an occasional elegant barque or schooner.

I may be forgiven, I hope, for excluding St. Michael's Mount from these pages : it has been explained already that this is not a guide-book, and the Mount is so conspicuous, so unavoidable and so celebrated, its outline is so familiar to every one, that it does not seem either consistent or necessary to mention it here.

The village of Marazion, which is on the mainland immediately opposite the Mount, at one time disputed with Mousehole the honour of being the most important place in the Bay. The name of the place has stimulated a good deal of scholarly controversy, the outcome of which has been the refutation of a Semitic origin (though the place is also called Market Jew), and the assertion that it means a market of some kind, with no allusion either to bitterness (mara) or to salvation (zion). There are many variants of the name, and Leland gives it as Marhasdeythyon.

In 1513 a French fleet of thirty sail appeared in the Bay,

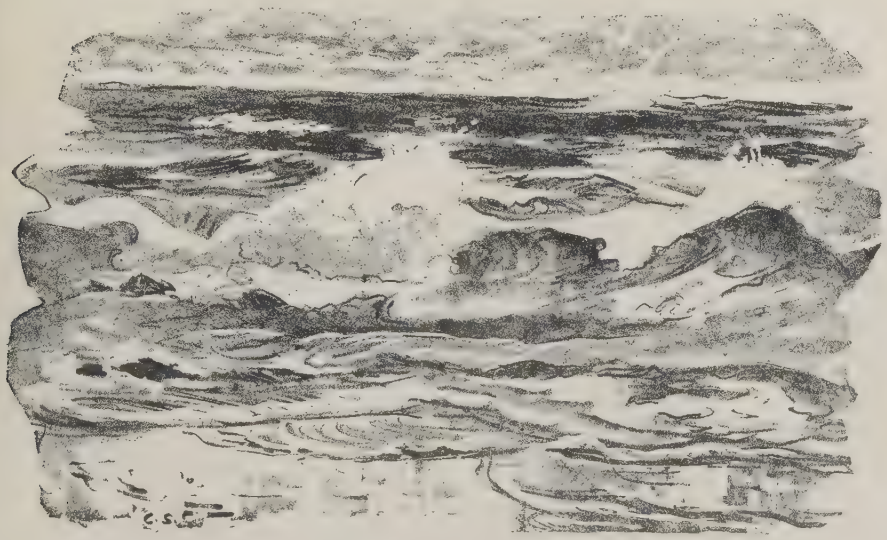
dropped anchor, and proceeded to land an armed force in Marazion. The inhabitants, who were not accustomed to this kind of thing, made but a feeble resistance, and eventually fled, abandoning the place to the Frenchmen. The enemy actually remained in possession for several days, when a formidable *posse comitatus* under James Erisey, the Sheriff of Cornwall, arrived on the scene. Observing the resolute aspect of the Sheriff and his *posse*, the invaders hastily set fire to the houses and withdrew to their ships ; the Cornish, on their side, thinking that the wisest policy was to allow this withdrawal to proceed without molestation. A little over eighty years later, a more serious invasion of Cornwall took place ; the curious facts relating thereto shall be presented in due course.

Near Marazion is St. Hilary. The confirmation of the vicarage of St. Hilary by Walter de Stapleton, Bishop of Exeter, took place in 1313. The old church was burnt in 1853. Of the present church, in the decoration of which a number of well known artists have assisted, one can only say that its interior represents the outcome of an earnest striving to reconcile ancient ecclesiastical tradition with a somewhat conscious virtuosity.

Passing from St. Hilary southward over Perran Downs, crossing the Penzance-Helston-Lizard road, and turning south again at Rusudgeon, you strike the coast near Cudden Point and the two celebrated smuggling coves : Prussia Cove and Bessy's Cove.

Sheltered from the direct observation of Penzance, and with certain facilities for the landing of cargoes, these coves were ideal for the jolly fellows who ran contraband in the days when

speed was a matter of big sails and deep keels, when captains great and small were ruled by the fortune of the winds, and when seamanship meant courage and audacity and not mere mathematics or engine power.



A SOUTH-WESTER IN MOUNTS' BAY

While we are looking at these rocky inlets, with their winding paths and grassy fringes, I will tell you something about the smuggling family of the Carters.

Chief of all Cornish smugglers was John Carter, who, for reasons that are variously given in different accounts, was known as the King of Prussia, and whose royal designation still lingers in the name of the Cove. The Carters are said to have come from Shropshire, but they were certainly established at Pengersick, near the Coves, in 1740, and the father

of the smugglers was a tinner. John was the chief, the organizer: his brother Henry, a canting rogue, who, in the words of Baring-Gould, "contrived to combine perfervid piety with cheating the customs," ran him a close second; and Henry himself tells us that he "made more safe voyages than have been ever made since or before with any single person." The family ran cargoes successfully for nearly forty years, starting in 1770. Of the "King's" exploits, the most sensational was the fight between his extemporized land battery of ancient guns and a revenue cutter which was chasing one of his own boats. Accounts of this engagement disagree in detail, like all histories of battles; according to some, the guns were withdrawn in the darkness; and, according to others, his artillerymen were taken in the rear by mounted troops from Penzance, whereupon they were allowed to retire: but the essential fact is, that he beat off the cutter. John lived to a great age, and died in comparative poverty. Besides Henry, he had another brother who assisted him in the family business.

Henry, or Captain Harry Carter, left a short autobiography. This was admirably edited by Mr. J. B. Cornish, and published by Pollard of Truro in 1894.

From this extraordinary document we learn that Henry was a young man with a very marked taste for religion, and a warm regard for the doctrines of Wesley. He started his career as a smuggler at the age of seventeen. I have called him a canting rogue, but I retract: let us give him the benefit of modern psychological whitewash, and say that he was a neurotic, unable to escape from his family's influence and vexed by continual repressions. It is well worth while to give a few passages from Captain Harry's own narrative.

HERRING PACKERS.

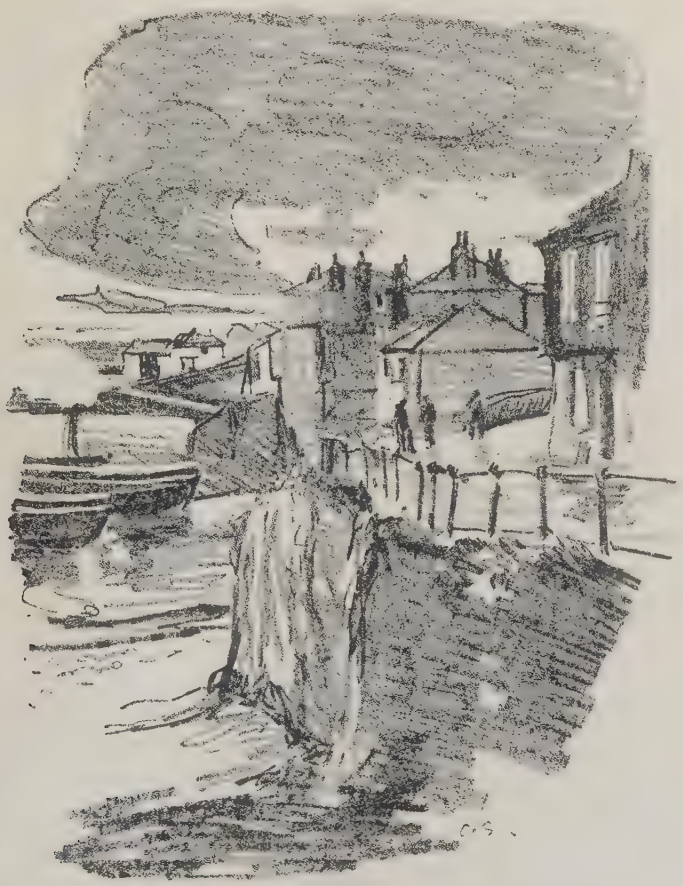
" This morning," he says, " being 20 of Decr. 1809, I have taken up my pen, and may the Lord bring past things to my remembrance yest as they are . . . and may the Lord make it a blessing to every soul that read and hear it." When he was twenty-five years old (1774) he had his own sloop and crew, and smuggled with great success. A little later he had a thirty-gun cutter, with a crew of ten, and his success continued. At times his conscience tingled with " convictions." He " allwayse had a dislike to swearing, and made a law on board, if any of the sailors should swear, was poneshed . . . Nevertheless in the meantime was capable to be guilty of outward sins the same as others of my companions, and often times, when out on a party, crying and praying to keep me from a particular sin, was often the first that was guilty of committing it. Then conchance, after staring me in the face, oh what a torment within I feelt. So I went on for many years sinning and repenting." In 1777 he had a sixty-ton cutter with " sixteen carriage guns " and a crew of thirty-six, " without any maritime pass or anything to show for them." He was seized at St. Malo, and, in spite of what seem to have been attempts to bribe the officer in charge of the prisoners, he was committed to gaol. Captain Harry wept in prison, thinking not only of his grievous sins, of the loss of his cutter and her " sixteen carriage guns," of the forfeiture of honour and freedom, but also of the vanished hopes of the ten thousand pounds which he had hoped to earn for the family as the result of yet more successful sinning. After being locked up in various places, he and his crew were exchanged, *through the influence of the Admiralty,* against two French prisoners. He put to sea again in his thirty-tonner. Things began to

improve, and the "company" acquired two new vessels: a nineteen-gun cutter and a twenty-gun lugger—"so that by this time I began to think something of myself again." He even "larned to swear at times." The lugger was sunk in an encounter with a Dunkirk privateer off St. Ives, with the loss of fourteen out of a crew of thirty-one: the cutter, which also took part in the engagement, picked up the survivors.

Next, we find Captain Harry going to America, where he rejoices in the company of the "dear people," the Wesleyans, and becomes increasingly religious. Soon after his return to England he tells us, frankly enough, "Aboute this time I made a linen girdle to go aboute my loins inside my shirt. Tied it tite—I thought I might be able to live upon less food and my spirit would be more vigorous in the wayse of good. I continued as far, as I think, aboute two days, found it quite disagreeable, and so left it off." He was imprisoned in France during the Revolution, and his impressions and adventures are recorded in a most vivid style. The autobiography ends with his home-coming in 1795; but the Carters continued their operations until 1807, or later.

South-west of Penzance, Newlyn grows up steeply between the edge of the Bay and the hill. It is a place where the terribly picturesque and the hideously respectable are strangely combined, in more senses than one. A malodorous place, reeking of expressed pilchard-oil, with a fine tidal harbour where, in due season, a host of steam drifters arrives from Grimsby and Lowestoft. At the landward end of the harbour the intermittent exhaust of the ice-works engine emits an irregular chug-chug; at the other end, the steamer from Gwav

quarry roars thunderously down iron chutes. The importance of Newlyn is derived from the fishery; and the fishery is



NEWLYN

ly dependent on the Italian demand for pickled pilchards. hough the mackerel fishing is now carried out almost

entirely by the East Coast drifters, pilchards are still caught by the native boats. On a calm evening you may occasionally see the dark ring of the seiners lying not far off the rocks, and hear the sound of their beating oars, smacked noisily on the water, and the shouting of the crews.

A delightful account of pilchard fishing in Elizabethan times, written by Carew, is in all essential respects applicable to the modern use of the seine. "The sain," he says, "is in fashion like that within the harbour, but of a far larger proportion. To each of these there commonly belong three or four boats, carrying about six men apiece; with which, when the season of the year and the weather serveth, they lie hovering upon the coast, and are directed in their work by a balker, or huer, who standeth on the cliff side, and from thence best discerneth the quantity and course of the pilchards, according whereunto he cundeth (as they call it) the master of each boat (who hath his eye still fixed upon him), by crying with a loud voice, whistling through his fingers, and wheazing certain diversified and significant signs with a bush which he holdeth in his hand. At his appointment they cast out their net, draw it to either hand, as the shoal lieth or fareth . . . and at last, either close and tuck it up in the sea, or draw the same on land, with more certain profit, if the ground be not rough of rocks. After one company have thus shot their net, another beginneth behind them, and so a third, as opportunity serveth. Being so taken, some, the country people, who attend with their horses and panniers at the cliff's side in great numbers, do buy and carry home; the larger remainder is by the merchant greedily and speedily seized upon." He might well be writing of Newlyn quay or the fish market to-day.

He goes on to describe the manner of packing and preserving the fish for export. There were three different ways of doing this, but the preparation was the same : the fish were salted, piled in heaps, and left for some ten days. " Then those which are to be ventured for France they pack in staunch hogsheads, so as to keep them in their pickle : those that serve for the hotter countries of Spain and Italy, they used at first to fume . . . drying them with the smoke of a soft and continual fire, from whence they purchased the name of fumados ; but now, though the term still remain, the trade is given over ; and after they have been ripped out of the bulk, reffed upon sticks, and washed, they pack them orderly in hogsheads made purposely leaky, which afterwards they press with great weights, to the end the train may soak from them into a vessel placed in the ground to receive it." Modern procedure is not quite the same ; but, during the export season, you will see rows on rows of oily, stencilled barrels piled under the iron roof on the north pier at Newlyn, waiting for the ship which will carry them to Genoa. Thus we see the continuance of a fish traffic which has endured for centuries.

Newlyn, of course, is renowned as the residence or the resort of painters. It is a name associated with a definite sort of picture and with a definite school of realistic art. Although the discussion of the relative merits of artists and of their works is outside the scheme of this book, I cannot leave Newlyn without paying my tribute to Mr. Stanhope Forbes. Every one knows that Mr. Forbes, one of the most notable figures in the history of English art, came to Newlyn many years ago, and was the founder of what became in time a very celebrated school of painting. But those of us who have

been privileged to know Mr. Forbes as a kindly host and as a friendly adviser (even when, as students, we occasionally plagued him) think of him less as the distinguished artist than as the pleasant man who stood always for what was best and cheeriest, most interesting and most entertaining, in the "colony" of Cornish painters.

Follow the cliff road from Newlyn, past shallow, rocky shores, and in something under two miles you are at Mousehole—a place of ancient celebrity and of most venerable foundation. Now, with the smoke of its many cottages rising filmy and placid against the sheltering bank, there is little in the aspect of Mousehole which can excite or interest the visitor. Yet it is a strange place. It is told that, when the Great War began in August, 1914, the notable men of the village, and those with a reputation for profound thought and for sagacity in council, met together, and promulgated their decision that "Mousehole would be neutral." Such a gesture at such a moment should not be lightly forgotten: it was a gesture of philosophic calm, of superb isolation. The black-fronted nations were drawing together in the massed rage of conflict: Mousehole was neutral. But let me add, in justice to the gallant men who were not neutral, that the most touching and most dignified cenotaph that I have seen anywhere in the country is that which now stands on the edge of the little harbour.

That curious old topographer, Leland, gives the following account of Mousehole and its neighbours. His *Itinerary*, from which this and some other extracts are taken, was published between 1535 and 1543. "Mousehole," he wrote, "ys a praty fischar towne in the west part of Mount's bay, lyyng

MOUSEHOLE

hard by the shoore, and hath no savegarde for shyppes but a forced peere : also in the bay be est the same towne ys a goode roode for shyppes called Gnaves lake. Newlin ys a poore fischar towne, hath al only a key for shyppēs and botes, with a lytle socur of land water : wythyn a arow shot of the said key or peere lyeth directly a lytle low island with a chapel yn it ; and this lytle islet bereth gresse "—Evidently an error : he refers, presumably, to the island off Mousehole—" Pensants, aboute a myle from Mousehole "—another error : he is again confounding Mousehole with Newlyn—" standing fast in the shore of Mount's bay, ys the westest market-towne of al Cornwayle, and no socur for botes or shyppes but a forced peere or key. Ther ys but a chapel yn the said towne ys yn Newlin . . . There hath been moch land devoured of the sea between Pensance and Mousehole." In Gough's Camden we are told that " Mousehole is a village inhabited almost entirely by fishermen, who live by catching seals in the bay, and making and selling train oil. They preserve some of the remains of the old Cornish language ; and, as they are frequently employed as pilots to Brittany, are understood by the natives there . . . Their tone of speaking approaches to singing or chanting."

Historically, Mousehole has interest as the scene of the landing of the Spaniards in 1595. The facts of this most astonishing raid are not generally known, and they are worth recalling, not only in so far as they constitute a remarkable, though perhaps unimportant, episode in the military history of Europe, but also on account of the strangeness and incongruity of the picture which they bring before us. We are again greatly indebted to Carew, who wrote of the event a few

years after it had occurred, and in possession of the full details ; but his account is supplemented and checked by evidence drawn from other documents. This is the story :

Towards dawn on the 23rd of July, 1595, a heavy mist trailed over the Bay. As the sun rose, and sky and water grew clear, those who were early astir in the fields of Kemyel and Raginnis, or coming down the short, narrow village streets to the harbour, saw four galleys riding at anchor not far south of St. Clement's Isle,—the "lytle islet" within a musket-shot of the shore. There was a martial sound on the galleys, and presently boats were lowered. Some two hundred soldiers were packed into the boats, and began to move landward over the unruffled sea. Alarm flies fast : Trevithel, Paul, Newlyn, Penzance—through all these, and further, the flight of fear and rumour awoke every one ; not to resistance, but to panic. Meanwhile the Spaniards, their armour flashing coldly in the morning light, arquebus and pike in hand, came ashore on the rocks beneath Raginnis, unopposed, and entered the village, driving a stream of fugitives up the hill before them. The place was abandoned to the enemy : only the lion-like Jenkin Keigwin making a stand in defence of his home. He was killed. The Spanish advance party pushed speedily on up the hill towards the church of St. Pol de Leon, burning and pillaging, mad and merry with the joy of invasion, shooting at stragglers and killing two or three of them. They fired the church, fired the wayside houses and those in the village of Paul ; while the main body fired Mousehole, and soon all was ablaze. The terrified people poured down over the hill and along the

cliff to Newlyn, and it was not long before there was a movement from Newlyn itself.

Sir Francis Godolphin, a gallant gentleman, looked across the Bay, and saw, to his utter amaze, the smoke of burning homesteads rise up in the bright air of that summer's morn. He saw the foreign craft at anchor; and he, with a number of his servants, and such others as had the heart to follow him, made the first move against the enemy. Godolphin rode through Penzance and met a mob of fugitives on the Western Green, between that town and Newlyn. His presence brought them to a stand, and, for a time, stiffened their resolution. He acted with perfect wisdom and without flurry. Realizing the possible gravity of the situation, and considering that further and more serious developments were to be apprehended, he "forthwith sent to all the captains of those parts, for their speedy repair with their companies; and also sent by post to Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins (then at Plymouth with a fleet bound for the Indies) advertisement of the arrival of these four galleys, and of their burnings, advising them to look to themselves, if there were any greater fleet of the enemies at sea, and to send west with all haste what succours by sea and land they could spare." Then, with true military foresight, he advised a withdrawal to Penzance, in order that it might be put in a state of defence. But the people had now grown courageous; they insisted on advancing towards the foe.

As Godolphin and his folk set their faces towards Newlyn, the galleys moved in along the coast and dropped anchor in Gwavas lake. Here they made a speedy landing, and ranged themselves in battle order, both pike and shot, on the slope

LAMORNA QUAY.

of the hill. Reconnaissance parties were sent up the hill, and they reported that there was no opposition, save only a weak force on the road from Penzance. The Spaniards immediately advanced. By this time, Godolphin's force

PENZANCE

appears to have reached the foot of the slope at Newlyn ; but, seeing the oncoming host, they hastily retired. While the retreating Cornishmen moved across the Western Green, the galleys opened fire on them with their light bow guns. This cannonade utterly destroyed the native *moral,* already shaken

by the burnings, by the flight, and by the grim aspect of the armed force which was marching towards them. A constable was bowled off his horse by the whiff and graze of a ball, and came with a thump and a howl to the ground, suffering no greater harm than the shock of the fall. There were no casualties. But some fell flat on the ground and roared for terror : the greater part ran as fast as their legs could carry them.

When Sir Francis found himself in Penzance (at that time little more than a village), he discovered that there were only two musketeers who "stood at his command," and some dozen besides, mostly his own servants. The rest were scattering. Furious and blasphemous was the rage of poor Sir Francis ! With drawn rapier, with alternate reasoning and threatening, with bursts of uncontrollable wrath, he rushed among the retreating mob ; but to no purpose. The Spaniards were in Penzance. They set fire to the outlying houses, and held a triumphant service on the Western Hill ; after which they pledged each other in good wine, and with much jollity made plans for the Spanish rule in Cornwall. Francis Godolphin passed through Chyandour storming bitterly, and at last succeeded in concentrating a force near the marshes of Marazion. The invaders returned to Newlyn which they burnt down : this accomplished, and finding that a whole day of successful invasion was hard work, they re-embarked in their galleys.

By evening, the camp at Marazion was worked up into a mood of defiance ; and, when the foe seemed disposed to make a further landing next day, the defender's attitude was such as to discourage him. The galleys raised anchor and drew

off, anxious to get out of range of the musket-balls and arrows which were being whizzed into them. By the following day, Her Majesty's land and sea forces were drawing near: but fortune, favouring the audacious, sent a brisk north-west wind; the enemy ships hoisted sail, and were soon out of sight. Penzance, Newlyn, Paul and Mousehole were in blackened ruin.

"Thus," says Carew, "have you a summary report of the Spaniards' glorious enterprise, and the Cornishman's infamous cowardice." Perhaps he is too harsh, too aristocratically intolerant. But a comparatively modern writer, Blight, wilfully concealing the true course of events, tells us that the Spaniards "came in four gallies and appear to have done considerable harm to the village (Mousehole) as well as to Newlyn and Penzance. As soon as Sir Francis Godolphin had induced a small company . . . to present an aspect of resistance the enemy made off." Upon my soul, Mr. Blight! "As soon as he had induced them"—yes, indeed!

What was the political meaning of this escapade? We know now that the galleys came over from Blavet in Brittany, and that they were under the command of Don Diego de Brochero. A very competent authority considers that the numbers of the military employed in this raid, as given in the old accounts (Carew says four hundred), is greatly exaggerated. There can be little doubt that the affair was meant to be provocative; it was a twisting of the lion's tail, with the idea of finding out how loudly he could roar and how swiftly he could strike. As a raid, it was a very brilliant and very audacious piece of work.

The good folk of Penzance were alarmed by the rumour of another raid in 1760, when an Algerine corsair ran aground close to the town. They had heard gunfire in the night (September 29-30), and next morning, behold, a strange vessel high and dry, and a crowd of outlandish men, with pistols and long curly swords, on the beach. The Algerine captain, poor man, thought he was "somewhere in the latitude of Cadiz." Eventually, the panic having subsided, a volunteer company marched gallantly to the beach, took charge of the visitors and their weapons, and impounded them in a large empty building. There was a second panic when it was suggested that the pirates might have brought the plague with them: these poor men were at length taken home in a man-of-war.

In 1779, the batteries on the Mount opened fire on a pirate ship in the Bay: the last occasion on which powder was burnt in the face of a foreigner.

But the old spirit was abroad in West Penwith during the Great War, when good fellows who were "watching" the coast mistook each other for German submarine officers, and "spies" were arrested and released daily. Perhaps the time is not yet ripe for a book on the humours of the War; but, when that book is written, Cornwall's contribution will have outstanding value.

ST. IVES AND FALMOUTH

"Many are the forts, bays and havens that open into this shire, both safe for arrivage and commodious for transport. The commodities of the shire, ministered both by sea and soile, are many and great; for besides the abundance of fish that doe suffice the inhabitants, the pilchard is taken, who in great skulles swarme about the coast."

SPEED.

Chapter V

St. Ives and Falmouth

THE distance over a straight line between St. Ives and Falmouth is about twenty miles. One lies in the entrance to a haven, where tranquil landscapes look down into tranquil waters ; the other is placed on the sheltered side of the first bay on the northern coastline of Cornwall which offers protection from the force and fury of the Atlantic gales. St. Ives Bay is a kind of ocean backwater, a sandy break in the iron wall of the cliffs, notched in behind the granite mass of Penwith : Falmouth Bay is the entrance to one of the most retiring and placid creeks in England. The two places are apparently unlike in every way ; in character, size, situation and aspect ; the people of the one are totally unlike the people of the other ; one has an ancient, nay, a legendary foundation ; and the other is relatively an upstart. And yet, dissimilar as they are, both are alike in the sense that they are typically Cornish : each gives you an aspect of unmistakable Cornwall.

In harmony with the scheme of this book, I purposely avoid descriptions of what has been so many times described elsewhere ; choosing rather those aspects and places and records which may be regarded as comparatively unfamiliar.

You may have read, or heard, how the daughter of an Irish noble, a Christian girl named Hya or Ia, desired greatly to join the expeditionary force of holy men and women who were setting forth from Ireland to fight heathendom in Wales and Cornwall. She had hoped to find a place in the company

of Fingan and Piala, devout missionaries, but they sailed without her. And one day, as Hya was walking by the water-side, there floated close to her a monstrous large leaf. She put forth her staff and drew the leaf towards her; it was so broad and so buoyant that she, stepping daintily thereon, was wafted across the sea to the very shore that she was

FALMOUTH HARBOUR

seeking. St. Ives, the scene of her landing, bears her name—St. Hya, or Iës, or Ia.

St. Ives possesses all the elements of the picturesque: rough streets, unexpected heaps of refuse, abundance of bold cats, slippery stone stairs, humorous fishermen, a celebrated inn, and a fine muddy harbour.

There are a number of artists in the place, who provide the public with an annual entertainment which is known as "show day." On "show day" every one is allowed free access

to all the studios, where may be seen pictures which are "intended" for the Royal Academy and elsewhere. The majority of these studios are in houses which were built for fishermen, and you ascend to them by means of the outside steps which are so characteristic of these and of similar houses in Cornwall, leading to the living-rooms over the fish cellar. Inside the studios you find a most curious, a unique crowd of picture-gazers. Pallid high-brows, with their black stocks and floppy hats stand by the side of chubby old fishwives; and ladies who would cut a seemly figure in the tea room at the Trocadero are elbowed by tough sailormen from the quay. Thus, in a strong smell made up of fish, tar, creosote, oil-paint, and things which are better imagined than described, a truly democratic set of sight-seers moves from studio to studio. The artists take up their position proudly or diffidently or nervously or doubtfully by their pictures of turnip-fields, moonrises, boats and fishermen, inevitable twilights and eternal seas, with an occasional portrait in mauve which is of the usual unusual sort, and a few really intellectual studies with plenty of blue lines and little dots. This kind of thing is probably what Gilbert (the Cornish historian and moralist to whom I shall introduce you in a later chapter) had in his mind when he spoke of men of "true taste and fortune" not only benefiting their own morals "but those also of the lower classes." It is indeed a rare privilege to which these poor people are admitted; and, judging by their comments, it is one which excites their unbounded admiration and gratitude.

Presumably, St. Ives did not acquire much importance before the beginning of the fifteenth century. The church was consecrated in 1428. But Carew, writing at the end of

the sixteenth century, describes the town and port as "of mean plight, yet, with their best means (and often to good and necessary purpose) succouring distressed shipping." He has a good word for the fish market. And Leland (about 1540) wrote: "The place that the chief of the town of St. Iës hath and partely dooth stande yn is a very peninsula, and is extended into the sea of Severn as a cape. Most part of the houses in the peninsula be sore oppressid or overcoverid with sandes that the stormy windes castith up there." The old pier was only built in 1767—1770; at which time a lighthouse was erected; and a breakwater which was started in 1816 was abandoned for lack of funds. An excellent grammar school was founded in 1650, but it failed to make good, and eventually came to an end.

It was at St. Ives, in 1743—1744 that the presence and preaching of John Wesley gave occasion to popular disorders. Although he had kindled a strong religious fervour and a strong sense of discipleship among the people of St. Just and Sennen, Wesley was shamefully treated in St. Ives, and was subjected to insult by foolish and unruly persons. It is probable, however, that the persecution of Wesley, both here and at Falmouth, was due, not so much to any spontaneous hostility of the mob, as to the provocative agencies of clergymen, ministers and schoolmasters, by whom he was regarded not only as one who was preaching subversive doctrines, but (a far worse thing) as one who might undermine their authority, and even deprive them of prestige and emoluments.

Like Newlyn, St. Ives has been associated for centuries with the catching of fish—not the pilchard, which swims off the southern bays, but the flashing, dashing mackerel and the

A WOODLAND ROAD NEAR THE FAL

silver herring. What a sight to be sure, is the harbour at low tide in the herring season. What a flapping and screaming of excited and voracious gulls ; what a ploshing of horses' feet in the mud ; what a sputtering and roaring of lorry engines ! The shiny cargoes are swung off the boats, packed slip-slap in barrels, hurried off in carts and lorries, all between the ebbing and flowing of the tide. Fish everywhere. Fish dangling on strings ; fish stuck on children's fingers ; mangled and crushed fish on the roadway—all the harbour seems silvery and slippery. It is a bustling, noisy, odorous scene. Across all the moving groups, athwart the boats, in the grey sky, on the gleaming sand, singly, in groups, in agitated white clusters, in swooping swirling companies, with continuous shrieking and croaking and wailing, the sea-gulls form a unifying motive both to hearing and vision : a clamour and a whiteness ; a line of speeding forms in the picture, an unrelieved shrillness in the concert.

The dog-fish, first cousin in ferocity to the terrible shark, is a bad, ugly, gluttonous fellow. He comes charging and snapping into the nets ; biting, lashing, and playing the very devil with them. He is a scavenging, piratical, unruly fish : a demon of the deep seas. In Simpson's picture, you see two men engaged in the nauseous task of skinning dog-fish ; a very frequent sight at St. Ives. In front of them, sea-gulls are yelling and fighting over the inwards. Why, you may well ask, take all this trouble with such a nasty creature ? But you must know, that this very dog-fish, after his death, decapitation, gutting and skinning, becomes a wicked masquerader on the London bills of fare ; posturing on many a glittering table, not in lowly ambiguity as mere "fish," but

SKINNING DOG-FISH, ST. IVES.

as filleted this and *à la* that, with sauces and seasonings and frills and fried crumbs. Neither must you think that it is only the villainous Greeks and Italians of Soho who serve you thus, for master dog-fish, all roguishly bedecked, cuts a fine figure elsewhere, and you have probably regaled yourself full many a time on his dull, soggy, but not unwholesome flesh.

So much for the town of St. Ives, with its fish and artists.

The road that leads from St. Ives to St. Just is one of the worst and most beautiful in the Duchy. It passes between the moors of the "high countries" and the coast, through the sternly romantic villages of Zennor and Morvah, and the once prosperous mining district of Pendeen. But the most delightful walk from St. Ives is along the cliffs of Burthallan, Hellesveor and Trowan to the rocky headlands of Pen Enys and Carn Nawn.

A little over a mile from the town, on the fringe of the rough ground above Hellesveor cliff, there is a group of fields whereon, when they are ploughed, you will find the innumerable translucent flint flakes which indicate the site of a "workshop" of the New Stone Age ; and here I have spent many cold hours in search of arrow-heads, cores, scrapers, and such things. But, just as you will find more shavings than chair-legs in a carpenter's shop, so you will find more chips and splinters than finished implements on the turned-up floor of a Neolithic "factory." It is not easy to find these fields without assistance ; and, although the site is mentioned in at least one popular guide-book, I believe that its exact position is practically unknown. The fields in question lie almost due south of Hor Point : they are intersected by the 300 foot contour-line of the Ordnance Survey.

On a hill to the south of St. Ives, overlooking the pleasant sands of Barrepta and Porth Kidney, is the monument of John Knill.

When I was going through the pages of Gilbert's *Survey* with an eye for amusing quotations, I came on a glorious account of the revels which were formerly held round this monument, and eagerly transcribed it. Since then, I have seen the same passage reprinted, without acknowledgment and without a smile, in a certain unimportant book published not so many years ago. In spite of this, I shall give it again here ; with this due advertisement, that I have taken it from the original source, and with a proper sense of gratitude. But first, a word as to Knill himself.

John Knill was born in 1733, and in due time set to study the law. At the age of twenty-nine he was appointed customs officer at St. Ives, and five years later he was mayor of that town. It was said, perhaps unjustly, that he was on very friendly terms with smugglers, and not entirely unacquainted with the benefits of wrecking. He had ability and diligence, and was sent to Jamaica in 1773 in order to furnish the Government with a report on the condition of the harbours there. Next year he was back in St. Ives. For a short period he was secretary to the Earl of Buckingham in Dublin. He became a customs inspector of some importance ; and, as he had to make frequent journeys to London, he acquired a liking for town life and bought a house in Gray's Inn Square in 1784. Here in 1811, he died. He set up his strange pyramidal monument in 1782, intending it as a sailing-mark for ships, a means of relieving local unemployment, and a tomb for his remains ; but this latter purpose was abandoned. He made

St. Michael Penkovič

arrangements for the holding of certain rites at this monument every five years, and the first of these quinquennial celebrations took place during his lifetime in 1801. The wonderful account of these celebrations which follows was written by "a spectator," and printed, as I have said, in Gilbert's book. The original programme included games of all sorts, wrestling, rowing, singing, flag-waving, and so forth, witnessed by an immense concourse. At the present day the thing has become a silly solemnity, wherein the chief actors are school children. But listen to the gentlemen who saw the first display in 1801 :

"Here the wrestlers exerted their sinewy strength ; there the rowers, in their various dresses of blue, white, and red, urged the gilded prows of their boats through the sparkling waves of the ocean ; while the hills echoed to the mingled shouts of the victors, the dashing of the oars, the songs of the virgins, and the repeated plaudits of the admiring crowd, who stood so thick upon the crescent which is formed by the surrounding mountains [!] as to appear *one living amphitheatre.* The ladies and gentlemen of Penzance returned to an elegant dinner, which they had ordered to be prepared at the Union Hotel, and a splendid ball concluded the entertainments of the evening. Hilarity and beauty danced to the most delicious notes of harmony, till the rosy finger of Aurora pointed to the hour, at which the quinquennial festivities should close." This is such a masterpiece of grandiose exaggeration that the mention of the Union Hotel hardly jars on us at all, overcome as we are by the spectator's fervid style.

A short branch line, winding along by the rocks and sandy beaches, runs from the station on the Porthminster beach at St. Ives, through Carbis Bay and Lelant, to the main line

at St. Erth. From Lelant station you look across the Hayle estuary—a wet, shining level of sand when the tide is out. Between this station and St. Erth, the railway crosses four little bridges. Many a time Simpson and I have concealed ourselves beneath these bridges, hopefully waiting with guns

ON THE FAL NEAR LAMORRAN

and field-glasses for the curlew, duck, or plover which are so abundant in this place.

Perhaps it is not without interest to note, as we cross the country to Falmouth, that, before the Hayle causeway was built, the tidal high-water marks in Hayle creek and in Mount's Bay were only three miles apart: West Penwith was on the verge of becoming an island.

FLIGHT OF WILD DUCK

Travelling by road from St. Ives to Falmouth, we have a choice of two main routes ; either passing through the ugly industrial regions of Hayle, Camborne and Redruth or along the tolerably good road through Praze and Trenwheal to Helston, and thence to Penryn and Falmouth—a very delightful though roundabout journey. There are shorter routes, but these, though passing over exceedingly fine country, are bad from the motoring point of view, abounding in puzzling turnings, vile surfaces and steep hills.

At Falmouth, as I have said, we are in a different atmosphere. Here you have all the calm and comfort and retirement of a haven. Here are tall ships, riding in ease and security, for all the world like graceful ladies in a drawing-room ; gallant, sea-going beauties, with taut cordage, elegant spars, and slender hulls. Here, let the grey up-channel seas race and rage as they will, there is shelter and safety for those who ride at anchor, withdrawn for a while from the toil and clamour of the ocean ways. Green trees and green fields are seen on the very edge of the water. This is the beauty and glory of a fair haven ; this sense of protection and of peaceful enclosure. Between the embrace of her two great piers, in her docks, and out on the waters of her roadsteads, Falmouth, kind sea-hostess, provides the best of accommodation for all sorts of craft.

Carew compares the harbours of Falmouth and Plymouth. "They say," he writes, "that Falmouth lieth farther out in the tradeway, and so offereth a sooner opportunity to wind-driven shipping than Plymouth ; but that Plymouth hath a better outlet, from his Catwater, for sailors bound to the westwards, and from Hamoase for those that would fare to

the east . . . Likewise, as Plymouth vaunteth richer and fairer towns and greater plenty of fish than Falmouth, so Falmouth braggeth, that a hundred sail may anchor in his circuit, and no one of them see the other's top, which Plymouth cannot equal." But it is agreed, he adds, that both have precedence over all the other havens of England with the exception of Milford.

KING HARRY PASSAGE FROM THE CHAIN FERRY

Leland speaks thus of the haven : "Falemuth ys a havyng very notable and famose, and in a manner the most principale of al Britayne. For the chanel of the entre hath be space of two myles to the land, thirteen fadum of depes which commonly is cawllyd Caryk-rood bycawse that it is a sure harbor for the greatest shyppes that travayle the ocean. At the entre of the haven lyeth a blind rok covered at full see nearer the west side of the haven than the east cawled Caregroyne."

Falmouth owes much to an ancient and long extinct family, the Killigrews ; perhaps it is not too much to say that they created the place. The Killigrews were a spendthrift, elegant, courageous, occasionally dissolute family ; graceful courtiers and sturdy soldiers ; somewhat addicted to piracy, and with a love of intrigue ; they were in fact, good old English gentlefolk, never a doubt of it. They lived in Arwenack House, which, in Elizabeth's time, was a stately mansion, whereof little now remains. It was fired by its owner, Sir John Killigrew, in 1647, in order that it might not be of service to "the rebels."

The Killigrews realized the advantages of Falmouth as a seaport. They incurred the open hostility of the neighbouring landowners of Penryn and Truro for this very reason. To use a modern term, the Killigrews " developed" Falmouth. In Carew's time the place was of small importance as a town, with but a few mean houses standing not far from the Manor of Arwenack. The Killigrews began to build, and their foresight was proved by the inauguration of the packet service in the final decades of the seventeenth century. In 1745 the last member of this adventurous and gallant family died in a house in St. James's Square.

The work which was begun by the Killigrews was very ably continued by those shrewd and righteous people, the Quakers, combining rectitude with perspicacity and proving that worldly success in matters of business was not by any means reserved for the ungodly. The Society of Friends and the Baptist Society were both established in Falmouth in 1670.

The great period of Falmouth may be said to cover the whole of the eighteenth century, when the packets sailed

thence to the West Indies, the Americas and Lisbon. Sturdy craft, these packets, and manned by sturdy crews. Tight, trim little ships, daunted neither by weather nor by the grinning guns of the privateers which so often bore down on them. I believe there is no account of the mail bags being captured : in the event of unavoidable surrender, these bags were shotted and heaved overboard.

As the life of Nantucket was bound up with the destinies of her whalers, so the life of Falmouth was bound up with the destinies of her packet boats. Braver men than the masters, mates, surgeons, commanders and crews of these packets never stepped on a sea-going plank, and their bravery is in no sense dimmed by the fact that most of them were systematic smugglers. Nearly all the tea which was sipped at the Falmouth card-parties, and nearly all the wine with which the gentlemen regaled themselves afterwards, never paid a penny of duty ; but you must remember that smuggling, at that time, was merely an adventurous form of commerce, and that it was not only winked at, but positively encouraged, by persons of the highest eminence, as well as by folk of learning and piety. As far back as 1580, it was proved that Commissioner Killigrew had dealings with a pirate ; while John Killigrew, husband of the infamous Dame, was charged in 1595 with not only giving warning to a pirate of the approach of a Government ship, but with sending him a supply of stores !

There are worse things than having dealings with pirates, and infinitely worse things than smuggling, however much we may disapprove of these practices when conducted by men in high positions of national trust. The black chapter

The Road to London

in the history of Falmouth and the Killigrews is that which relates to the Dame aforesaid. Briefly it befell thus :

On New Year's Day, 1583, a Spanish ship arrived in the harbour, and was forced to remain there for lack of a fair wind. The two owners, one of whom was captain, came ashore and took lodgings at an inn. Dame Mary Killigrew, whose character is sufficiently illustrated by her actions, knowing that the Spaniard had a valuable cargo on board, devised the wholesale murder of the crew, having endeavoured vainly to get the owners back on board in order that they might perish with the rest. The plot was supposed to be unknown to her husband, but we cannot believe that he was ignorant of it. Be that as it may, at midnight on the 7th January, Dame Killigrew's cut-throats, led by two scoundrels named Hawkins and Kendal, boarded the ship, raised the anchors, set the sails, and taking the crew by surprise massacred every man of them. Dame Mary had to be satisfied with a portion of the loot which was sent back in the boat used by the murderers, but the ship herself, with the greater part of her cargo, was taken across to Ireland and there plundered. The Spanish owners brought their case before the Commissioners for Piracy in Cornwall, but, as might have been expected, failed to get a conviction. ("The early Cornish vice-admirals," says Mr. Oppenheim, "were less trustworthy than those of any other county, and so far as the suppression of piracy depended upon them, it is not strange to find that it flourished exceedingly within their jurisdiction.") The owners, however, were not thus to be fobbed : they took the case to London, an inquiry was appointed and the truth revealed. It was only through the sort of influence which is commonly invoked on such

occasions that Dame Killigrew's villainous neck was kept out of the noose. Kendal and Hawkins were both hung at Launceston.

Falmouth is admirably defended, in the geographical rather than in the military sense, by Pendennis Point. A fortified work has probably crowned this point from prehistoric times. The present castle came into being in the reign of Henry VIII, who restored an earlier structure, but it was made a first-class fortress by Queen Elizabeth, who gave it a hundred pieces of ordnance and a garrison of a thousand men. In 1646 it sheltered the Falmouth loyalists and was besieged for five months by the forces of Cromwell. Obviously, the defence of such a place against attack from the mainland was hopeless from the very first: the garrison proved their loyalty, or obstinacy, or defiance, by enduring great misery and privation, wherein the chief sufferers were the women and children, and the siege was honourably concluded by a surrender. This was the last fortress in England to hold out for the King, and it is perhaps appropriate that Falmouth should possess a church dedicated to the unhappy Charles.

The road which runs round Pendennis Point, beneath the walls of the old castle, affords a very pleasant walk, with fine views of the entrance to the Carrick Roads, of Zoze Point and St. Mawes, and seaward.

In the steep, narrow, and rather prosaic streets of Falmouth to-day, you will not find many traces of the eighteenth century houses in which the packet commanders, with their wives and daughters, entertained their friends at decorous card-parties, and where gentlemen in blue coats and white ruffled shirts talked in subdued tones of matters maritime and of daring

transactions. Most of those houses have disappeared ; others are disastrously modernized. The prison of Falmouth was built in 1660. In connection with this, we may recall a Cornish saying which is applied to people with an aptitude for "dropping bricks"—"like the Mayor of Falmouth, who thanked God when the town gaol was enlarged."

RESTRONGUET CREEK

Our illustrations give an excellent idea of the villages and churches and landscapes of the Fal and of the creeks that open into the Carrick Roads. Mylor church, it may be noted, has an ancient foundation ; it dates back to 1308. Ruan Lanihorne, at the head of the Fal inlet, is a rare place for the duck shooter. Restronguet Creek is the broadest, and at low water the muddiest, of the creeks. Constantine is one of the most

charming of Cornish villages, set in the midst of hills, woods and streams; I should not say that it is one of the most characteristic. Gweek is a hamlet at the head of the Helford river; a tidal port, with small fishing craft.

There is a certain resemblance between the Helford and Falmouth scenery and that of Milford Haven and the Cleddau River: you get the same tidal creeks, steep and wooded, the same broad, placid waters at full tide, and the same blending of the rural and marine elements. But the mud of the Falmouth river flats is unlike any other that I know of. It is formed by a pale, greyish, sticky sediment, probably to a large extent adulterated kaolin, washed down from the St. Austell granite and the china clay works.

Mylor Church

ACROSS THE MOORS: THE TAMAR TO TRURO

"Bear me, some God! oh quickly bear me hence
To wholesome solitude the nurse of sense . . "

POPE.

Chapter VI

Across The Moors: The Tamar To Truro

PEOPLE who are fond of dabbling in the "new psychology" (which is, indeed, the most that anyone can do) are much addicted to what they call "word associations." Some one reads out a list of words, with pauses between each, and the victim of the experiment blurts out the first words or ideas that come into his mind in connection with them. If I were subjected to this test, and I had to respond to, or, as our psycho-dabblers prefer to say, "react" to the word "Cornwall," I should not hesitate for a moment: I should say "moors." For the instant vision of Cornwall that comes into the memory, when it is called on to make this particular response, is a vision of the moorland.

Less vast, less lofty than the moors of Devon, but infinitely more mysterious, more varied in form and mood, the Cornish moors have a penetrating charm which is peculiar to themselves. In all their aspects they have a strange, almost a menacing beauty; something that eludes all wordy striving; mutable yet eternal, transient as the shadow of a cloud, yet steadfast as the granite on their brows. On these airy downs and uplands you find Unknown Cornwall. You find an exalted liberty, a sense of the timeless youth of the world, of the fervour and fertility of nature; you apprehend, dimly, a new, inexpressible and joyous dimension. The very air has a kind of unearthly purity, thinness and fragrance, blowing free under the clean, open heavens, and stirring the scents

of furze-bloom and bracken. No one can say that he knows the moors, that they have no revelations in store for him, that he is intimate with all their deep and bountiful beauties, has read their meaning, disclosed all their sweetness and terror—or if anyone should so speak, then he would make it clear that he had neither eyes to see nor a spirit to apprehend.

Such is the strange power and allurement of the moors that the most portly and torpid persons become infected thereby; and I have seen old gentlemen conduct themselves, when actuated by these strange yet impalpable influences, in a very surprising and extravagant manner. The man who could walk the moors in undeviating, unwondering stolidity would be altogether outside my sympathy or comprehension. I should be astonished if the most forlorn, bespatted and tremulously respectable old city drudge failed to brighten up and enjoy the pleasure of living when he found himself on these moors. As for you and me, we are no sooner joyously unloosed on the uplands—why, all our cares and woes straightway fall from us with as sudden and gladsome a thump as the Pilgrim's packet of sins; the blessed air of Cornwall fills our lungs, tingling and stinging blithely like bumpers of heady wine; before our eyes the wonderful, billowy line of the hills rolls in grand and gracious curves towards the valleys and the sea.

To enjoy properly the freedom of the moors, you do not want a prattling undergraduate or a young woman at your elbow. You must do without the travelling companion who, if you are a writer, serves, by his real or assumed presence, as a foil to your wit; that amiable, nondescript soul, who lives only to illuminate your superiority. You must walk

LOOKING WEST FROM DOSMARY POOL : HAWKSTOR

alone. It is only thus that you are fitted for the reception and recognition of the marvels and delights that await you. Our great moments come to us in what is termed solitude. At such moments we transcend the common experience of the herd: and, mind you, the proximity of even one other individual may be just as bad as that of a whole herd. Free-

KIT HILL

dom is relative, at best it is momentary and fleeting; but even this fleeting freedom is beyond our grasp as long as one human presence is there, with its ordinary human demands.

I say you must be alone to enjoy the moors; and you must walk. If you walk in the company of another person, you might as well walk with a regiment. Unless you want to make love, or write a book of comic travels, there is no

Grayston Bridge
C.S.

excuse for walking in company. Walking alone is the supreme recreation, nay, the rejuvenation of an intelligent being: walking in company is to make oneself no better than a sheep. Soldiers, of course, make a brave show when walking together, but that is because they are trained to keep step, and thus their marching company moves with a unity of control and purpose which gives it, as a mere walking machine, something of the completeness of individual progression. But who ever really enjoys a walk, as such, with a companion? There is only room for one on a path. There is only one track, for you, across the moor or the open fields. Your starting and stopping, your speed, your little circuits and turnings—how can you suffer them to be influenced by the presence of a companion? Walking should be as private a matter as thinking. When I am stepping it across the moors, I resent the appearance of any other person, just as I resent the appearance of a slug in my salad: I have often concealed myself like an Irish sniper, in hedge or thicket, in order to avoid some rustic encounter. The presence of some one else, when you are walking for enjoyment and solace, imposes a discipline both on mind and body. You are no longer free to step where you please on the great surface of the earth, or to give expression to your thoughts in any way that may seem pleasant to you. Neither your feet nor your fancy is free. As for silly ideas about the companion who "understands," that only means that he, or she, is really so entirely negligible that his or her presence has a purely negative effect on your thoughts and movements. You ignore the companion in this case, or dominate him so that he becomes a wretched reflex or echo of yourself. That is a false relationship, and you are not

one whit nearer emancipation than you are with some loquacious and intrusive fool. Emphatically and finally: you must walk alone.

The moors of Cornwall owe their elevation and outline to the resistance of the great masses of granite which have withstood the washing and wearing away of softer material. Actually, they give an impression of greater height and extent than they really possess. Brown Willy, on the Bodmin moor, is only 1,375 feet; Hensbarrow, near St. Austell, rises to little over 1,000; and the highest hill in the Land's End district, Watch Croft, is but 827. Yet there are no hills that have a more wonderful or mysterious effect.

The surface of the moors is roughened by outcropping ledges and slabs of granite, which are sometimes piled on the hill-tops in fantastic and terrifying forms. These rocky places have been associated in legend (as we shall see) with riotous demons, witches, sprites and the terrible dead.

Except for the strips of low-lying land which cross the county from sea to sea between Padstow and Fowey, and between Hayle and Marazion, the Cornish hills may be said to extend from the eastern boundary to the end of the peninsula. These hills may be divided, as regards altitude and bareness (coinciding with the granite masses) into four main groups: first, the great moors of Bodmin; then the group comprising the St. Breock Downs and Hensbarrow Downs, between Wadebridge to the north and St. Austell to the south; then the carns which lie between Redruth and Camborne and the Falmouth inlet; and finally the "high countries" of the Land's End.

The Cornish Hills
From Gammelakra
C.S.

The approach to the Bodmin moors from Devonshire, by whichever road one crosses the Cornish border, is a delightful one. Tavistock is two and a half miles by road from the Cornish border and the glorious hill of Gunnislake. From Gunnislake hill, with its steep slopes and the broad belt of woods beneath them you get a magnificent view of the Cornish

LAUNCESTON

moors. I shall not attempt to describe this view (and who takes pleasure in descriptions of views, anyway ?) since you are able to see it for yourself in Simpson's fine drawing.

Hingston Downs and Kit Hill, the first eminences within the Cornish border, rise with the grace and steepness that are so characteristic of the granite moors. From thence you have a rare prospect in looking back towards Devonshire and the

Tamar valley with Blackdown wood and Hatch wood standing above the coils of the river.

Perhaps I have a preference for the Tavistock-Launceston road. As you rise to Milton Abbot, with the woods of the Tamar valley on your left, the rounded, conical mass of Kit Hill still farther to the south, Dartmoor behind you and the Bodmin hills bounding your forward horizon, you feel that the first impression of Cornwall is more than equal to expectation. Then you pass Dunterton, with its pleasant little church, and descend steeply into the gorge of the Tamar, reaching Greystone Bridge by a woody and winding road. Beneath this bridge flows the Tamar, which is here, and for the greater part of its course, the natural boundary between the two counties. Up, past the wood on the other side of the river, and on to Launceston—about four miles from the bridge.

Launceston is a mile within the southern edge of the Devonshire salient—a salient which is caused by the boundary deviating from the Tamar just above Higher New Bridge, where the river Ottery joins the former, following the Ottery for about eight or nine miles, and then looping round erratically until it joins the Tamar again, little more than three miles from the deviation. The town is of some historical importance, though scarcely a trace of its ancient glory remains. "Lancesston, otherwys cawlled Lostephan, yn old tyme cawlled Dunevet," says Leland, "is a walled town, ny yn cumpas a myle, but now ruinus ; on the north side of the towne a castel standing on a rokky hye hille withyn the sayd towne hath three round wardes ; part of the castel standing northwest ys part of the walle of the towne. Ther be withyn this

IIII. SOUTH GATE, LAUNCESTON.

towne three gates and a postern, and within this castel is a chapel and a hawle for syses and sessions, and a commune gayle for Cornwall." You will notice at the old south gate how a tree picturesquely grows out of the wall. The "com-

BOLVENTOR

mune gayle" is now a museum. An additional arch over the footway commemorates the Jubilee of Queen Victoria.

We leave Launceston on the Bodmin road, and now, assuming that we have a good engine at our command, ten minutes' run brings us to the edge of the Bodmin moors. Losing sight of the higher ground for a moment as we drop

into a little valley at Two Bridges and cross the Inny and Penpont Water, the full glory of the moors bursts on us as we swing round below Altarnun and make for the very heart of the wilds. And I do not speak of the wilds in a purely rhetorical sense. The character of the moors is unquestiona bly a wild character. They have a free, noble and expansive beauty, a broadness and magnificence of outline which are essentially wild. The tors, with their granite crests, the quaggy marshes and sedgy streams, the sheeny pools and the dark tarns, the circles of grey stone, the old burial mounds, the lordly peak of Brown Willy dominating the lesser hills, the black turf-stacks, the little, rough, lonely farmsteads, so soon lost to sight in the folds of the downs—all these make up a strangeness in which the elements of delight and terror are mingled. I cannot dwell on the peculiar beauties of the High Moor, the West Moor, and the Garrow Downs ; on the particular mysteries of Hawk's Tor, or the supreme view which you behold from the summit of Brown Gelley ; I cannot wander off to the long slopes of Smallacombe or the stony ruggedness of Twelve Men's Moor, Kilmar, and Begrah : I have only time to lead you aside at Bolventor, and to introduce you, howbeit briefly, to the marvel of Dosmary Pool.

Dosmary Pool, approached by a mere trackway, though little more than a mile from the main Bodmin road, is one of the least known though most glorious things in Cornwall. It is one mile due north of Brown Gelley, and about a mile and a half from the hamlet of Bolventor. It is in the very heart of the moors. To the east of it, the ground falls sharply over the hill towards the valley of the River Fowey ; but the Pool itself lies between two long, gently curving folds of the

moorland. The greatest breadth of the Pool is rather more than a quarter of a mile. For the most part, the banks are soft and sedgy. Close to the northern rim stands a little croft, and above the croft are the two huts built by Mr. and Mrs. Naper of Lamorna and my good friends Harold and Laura Knight. That such a place should be chosen by painters for an occasional residence is not to be wondered at, for nowhere on earth are there landscapes more austerely beautiful,

PAINTERS' HUTS: DOSMARY

more wonderful in their changes of mood and colour, or more splendid in outline. Looking from the huts, you see Brown Gelley across the Pool; from the higher ground behind you (that is, to the north) your view embraces the peak of Brown Willy, with Rough Tor beyond. The Pool in its placid moods, when it becomes a mirror reflecting the forms of moor and cloud, has a charm so powerful, yet so elusive, that it can only be conveyed to you in pictures: the limits of descriptive writing are soon reached when we are dealing with the sublimely simple in landscape, and the charm of Dosmary is composed, visually, of the simplest elements—water, sky and earth.

Indeed, the value of much of the Cornish landscape is essentially a pictorial value, a value of breadth and space, of sky and cloud, of wide surfaces and large, simple forms. The landscapes of literature are otherwise : crowded with detail or incident or movement, like the canvases of Lorrain. On a still, clear night the place is perhaps more wonderful than ever. Away to the south-east, across the stern black line of the moors, you see the dim, rhythmic wheeling of a fan of light : that light comes from the great lantern at the Lizard, down on the edge of the sea, some fifty miles off.

The moorland farms (they are mere cottages, mostly, and small at that) are lonely, low buildings, linked up by occasional trackways. The walls of them are often made of untrimmed granite blocks ; the outbuildings are practically all constructed with rough stones. Round about them and near their stone walls are the dark turf-stacks ; and here and there the gleam of water in the soggy earth, in places where the strips of turf have been lifted. It is turf that keeps the fires burning in these lonely crofts, turf that bakes the bread in the kale-pot on the open hearth, and it is the smoke from the turf that gives a subtly acrid flavour to the cream, and fills the air with such a primitive and kindly fragrance. No ovens in these farmsteads ; on the big flat hearthstone, covered with glowing and smoking earth, they clear a space, and thereon place the raw loaves and the inverted iron kale-pot on top of them ; and then the hot ashes are raked back again.

Observe how stone is everywhere present, everywhere dominating. Walls, houses and stiles are all of stone ; the spongy, springy earth is ridged and barred and broken by stone ; circles of stone, huts of stone, enclosures and lines of

Brown Gelly from Dozmary Pool

stone show us their primeval greyness ; on the tors and hill-tops great upreared masses and blocks of stone present an ominous and jagged outline ; everywhere the hard, extrusive, shattered and riven stone.

Tradition has it that Dosmary Pool is bottomless—that sticks flung into it have been afterwards carried subterraneously to Falmouth Harbour. As a matter of fact, it is very shallow, and its dark, deep colour is caused by a peaty infusion. So strange and beautiful a mere is associated naturally with stories of the ghostly and the marvellous, with the wild wraith of Tregeagle and the mystic sword Excalibur. It could not be otherwise. The very passage of cloud and shadow, of mist and darkness over its face, the luminous forms that move phantasmally over its waters, would suggest miracles and marvels to the least imaginative mind.

But now we have to make a transition. We will come down into the valley of the Fowey River, turning sharply from it at Redgate, where we make for St. Cleer, and so to the main road at Liskeard.

What you notice at the very first about Liskeard is the steepness, the horrid declivities of its thoroughfares. The place is a terror for motorists—at least for those who are unskilful or timorous drivers, with a lack of control over clutch and brake. "Liskard," says Leland, "stondith on rokky hilles, and is the best market-town at this day [1540] in Cornwall saving Bodmyn. . . There was a castel on an hille in the towne side by north from S. Martin, now al in ruine, the site magnificent, it lookith over al the towne ; it was the Erle of Cornwall's." At the present day, the site, or rather the alleged site, is all that is left.

The road from Liskeard to Lostwithiel is certainly dreary. Lostwithiel, on the right bank of the River Fowey, is another hilly place, a place of steep streets and awkward corners. It is one of the most ancient places in the county, for it was granted a charter as a borough in 1196. Leaving it by the road that leads to St. Blazey, you rise to higher ground, and soon get

ST. BLAZEY

a view of the sea. From St. Blazey, the Hensbarrow and Longstone Downs, the second highest moors in Cornwall, unroll their fine curves against the skyline. We are now in one of the industrial areas of the county, an area devoted to the preparation and exporting of china clay. Here and there on the landscape you see the white blotches of the pits or dumps and at Par station, where the stuff is brought by rail and

loaded on to ships, the white dust seems everywhere. Of all dreary and dull roads, perhaps that from St. Blazey to Par is the dreariest, dullest and dustiest.

LOSTWITHIEL

China clay is the commercial salvation of Cornwall. Tin mining is on the decline, tragically so in some parts of the county, whence scores of fine fellows have been driven to seek better fortune in Africa and America; but the china clay or kaolin industry is growing year by year. It is an industry that was already a thriving one in 1813.

Kaolin is a product of disintegrated or rotten granite—a product of the moors. It is a hydrated basic silicate of alumina. The felspar, one of the constituents of granite, is itself made up of silicate of potash and silicate of alumina, and the effect of decomposition on these substances is to separate the two silicates and to transfer the alumina and silica, by admixture with water, into china clay. This clay is of immense importance, and is put to all sorts of uses, some of which are distinctly questionable. It is invaluable in the manufacture of all the best kinds of glazed pottery, and even the waste products of its preparation are turned to account. The paper on which some of the coloured pictures in this book are printed is coated with a form of kaolin. Cornwall produces a finer white clay than is found elsewhere; a fact which accounts for the growth and importance of this trade.

St. Austell, it is useless to pretend otherwise, is an ugly place. Its streets are narrow, its aspect severe and formal; but there is no question as to its importance, for it is the very centre of the white clay industry—it might be called Kaolin City.

As we approach Truro the character of the landscape changes, and the industrious whiteness of the commercial area is left behind. There are fine landscapes at Probus; and the church, with the dark trees in the yard, and its fine sixteenth century tower, is one of the most beautiful, though perhaps one of the least characteristic, in Cornwall. Like the church of St. Buryan, which we have visited already, Probus claims a collegiate foundation by Athelstan in the tenth century.

Of Truro, dominated by Pearson's fine cathedral, one of the most graceful and impressive examples of modern ecclesi-

astical architecture, I must say but little. This is not a book of towns, and Truro, though an ancient town, has a rather hard, up-to-date countenance, even admitting that it has character and a certain dignity of its own. It has grown, indeed, since it was first named—The Town of the Three Streets:

"Tru ru,
Triueth eu,
Ombdina geueth try ru."

TRURO

ACROSS THE MOORS: WEST PENWITH

With a Discourse on Hurling

"The Cornish soil, for the most part, is lifted up into many hills, some little of quantity, some steep, some easy for ascent, and parted in sunder by short and narrow vallies."

RICHARD CAREW.

Chapter VII

Across the Moors: West Penwith

CARN KENIDJACK or Carn Idzhek, is a place of terrors. It is known as the Hooting Carn. A mass of piled and shattered granite, capping the moorland about a mile and a half north-east of St. Just, with a fantastic stony dishevelment—a clumsy, crazy and sinister outline. The fiends of hell, dark and monstrous figures, resort to this place, so they say, at night; and you may see the glimmer of a ghostly light about the rocks of the Carn, and the coming and going of black, massive forms. Over the heaths of Carnyorth and Truthwall, among the burial mounds and the circles and the ancient stones, a cloaked horseman on a lean and spectral horse rides in pursuit of the homeless dead.

Hunt tells us of two miners (St. Just or Botallack men presumably) who were returning one night after a drink at Morvah—though it is not clear why they should have gone so far for their liquor—and who found themselves wandering about on the common near Carn Idzhek. It was a thick, black, still night; but there was a glimmering and a moaning and a dim movement up on the hill. Then came the hammering of hoofs, drumming on the turf and ringing on the stone, and the dreadful horseman, hurrying past, roared out an invitation to "come to the Carn and see the wrestling." Up to the Carn they went, and there the horseman blended mystically with the rocks, and out of all the hooting and the glowing darkness there came a strange company of wrestlers—men of vast

strength and stature, with wild hair and painted cheeks. Two terrible demons fell a-wrestling; such a bout was never seen—sinews cracking, sweat like fiery beads, groans like bulls, and a trampling that shook the ground. There was a throw, and one wrestler, flung with such force that his great carcase struck

A FOX ON CARN KENIDJACK

the earth with a sound as of thunder, lay seemingly dead. The miners, whose fears had not prevented them from viewing the whole thing as a sporting event, ran up to the prostrate form, and one of them, reading death in its writhing and hideous face, spoke words of Christian comfort. Poor miner! He did not realize the impropriety of such words in such a place. He did not understand that he was guilty of a very

Carn Brea
C.S.

thoughtless and clumsy offence, that he was displeasing his host, and ruining the evening's entertainment. But no sooner were these words out of his mouth than the most damnable commotion began. The blackness of the night seemed to rush solidly upon them with howling and terror, like the blast of a raving wind; the earth rumbled and trembled, there was a shrill whirring, and then the terrified men found themselves alone on the moor.

That touch about the "painted cheeks," which I take *literatim* from Hunt, is interesting. If it is really a part of the traditional story (which is probable), it is not unlikely that it comes down from extremely remote times—it may be an orally transmitted account of prehistoric custom, a direct inheritance from eye-witnesses of prehistoric ceremonial.

There are other stories of this neighbourhood—stories of a poor old avaricious man, overcome by somnolence when treasure-hunting on the moors, dreaming of the hills all covered with fairy lights, of the myriads of tiny people, only a few inches high, of their music, of their miniature splendours, and then the gold plate of their banquet; but, as he slides along on his tummy and tries to grab the plate, he finds that he has been tied down, like Gulliver, and the little people begin to prick and prod him without mercy: so he wakes, enmeshed by dewy gossamers and tingling with the pangs of rheumatism.

I tell you these stories, not because they contain elements which are uncommon in folk-lore (they are, indeed, of an ordinary type), but because they help to suggest the grimness and the beauty and the wonder of the Penwith moors.

The extent of these moors is inconsiderable. An active walker can easily cover the whole length of the road which

passes along their western and northern slopes in the course of one day, without hurrying himself. They are skirted and traversed by numerous roads, the mark of the landowner and cultivator is upon them, they have nothing of the great bareness of the Bodmin hills, their eminences are relatively low—

A CURLEW ON THE MOORLAND

and yet it is to these moors that I should lead you, if you wished to realize, in the shortest possible time, what is most beautiful and most unknown in Cornwall.

The hills of West Penwith bring us into close, one might say into familiar contact with the prehistoric and the ghostly. Circles, barrows, longstones, dolmens, ancient villages and subterranean corridors—all these impressive and mysterious

FLIGHT OF CURLEW—TWILIGHT.

things are here. And then the old mine-workings: the abandoned, tower-like ruins of engine-houses, the rough stone walling of the shaft-heads, the mounds and hillocks of the dumps. The old mines are every whit as strange and sinister as the craggy granite of the carns. If you visit the desolation of Ding Dong, all in silent ruin, all grim and crumbling, with its Jacobine Shaft, Ishmael and Killiow Shafts, Greenpeas Shaft and Tallow Shaft, its skeleton of a pumping station, with the tall chimney that stands there like a monument; if you send a bit of granite bumping down into the echoing darkness of a shaft, its descent ending in a dim, sickening splash far below you; you will feel such a strange sense of loneliness and horror that you will be glad, perhaps, to trot down to the road at Lanyon and see the trippers go by in their cars. You will think of the legend of the "dead hand"—the ghostly hand that moves in the blackness of the old shafts, holding its candle-stump, seeking in vain to reach the upper world.

The prehistoric stone remains, here and in other parts of the county, must be reserved for another chapter. My purpose now is to give you a very brief and frankly topographical survey of the Penwith hills, before I present you with my note on the ancient game of hurling.

Carn Brea—Chapel Carn Brea—might be termed the first and last of English hills; at any rate, it is the hill nearest the Land's End. A conical eminence, some 650 feet above sea-level, commanding remarkably fine views, landward and seaward. The pile of tumbled grey stones on its top forms a group of ruins which is probably unique: the ruins of an early Christian chapel on the ruins of a pagan sepulchre. The chapel was dedicated to St. Nicholas; it was despoiled for the building

of a barn somewhere at the foot of the hill. The sepulchre was of a type that occurs frequently in the West Country (a chambered cairn) and the form of the sepulchral chambers can still be traced. A flat, natural table of granite on the eastern slope, just below the top, has been known for generations as the "stone of sacrifice," though such designations are, of course, purely fanciful, and of the sort which are adopted without any foundation save that of a mere possibility.

To the north-east of Carn Brea are the ancient fortresses of the Hill of Fire (Bartinney) and of Caer Bran. The Hill of Fire is barren, bare and strangely sinister. Caer Bran—the Castle of Brennus—is crowned by a fine circular earthwork.

A mile to the north of Bartinney, the main road to St. Just crosses the moors. Beyond this road, and across the road to Pendeen, begins that glorious line of moors which extends from Chûn to Carn Galver, whereon you shall find no lack of marvels and beauties, and perhaps of terrors. Watch Croft, on the White Downs, is the highest hill in the district. Here, on a day of drifting sea-fog, I have seen sudden, bright-coloured views flash out through the rifted grey of the mist: a line of foam on the rocks far below; the gaunt form of an abandoned engine-house; a distant glimpse of Morvah, with its desolate little church; a pale emerald pattern of fields on the lower slopes—and then the greyness would roll together again, fold on fold, full of the cries of unseen curlew. There are strange stones on Watch Croft, and traces of a burial-place.

A little farther to the north-east is the long, jagged, precipitous mass of Carn Galver, from whose granite ledges you

Cesar Galvez C.S.

look about you at an infinite variety of grand landscapes. To your left, if you look seaward, the coastline curves round to Pendeen Watch with its lighthouse, off which the sea trails foamily over the rocks of the Three Stone Oar. Below you are the farmsteads of Bosigran and the Porthmeors, with the coastal road winding like a white thread among the green, stone-walled fields. To your right is the rocky ridge of Hannibal's Carn (how on earth did it get that name?), a lesser version of the Galver, and, beyond that, the side of the Bosporthennis valley. Behind you stretch the amazing moors, with gloomy, ruinous Ding Dong, the stones of Boskednan, the grey, tumbled granite boulders, the gorse bushes and the springy heath. If it is a still day, you will hear the soft thunder of the sea encompassing you, and perhaps even the droning note of the bell buoy on the Runnelstone, a dozen miles away to the south-west.

Descending to the little valley, the western slope of Mulfra, the Bald Hill, rises sombrely above you: Mulfra with its prehistoric villages (of which I shall speak later), its tumbledown dolmen, and its stone walls. Thence you bear north-east over the bleak beauty of the downs (somewhat marred, here and there, by some atrocious little houses and by the electric power standards) towards the witch's hill of Trewey, and the great stony ramparts above Zennor.

The dip between the hills of Trendrine (the second highest in Penwith) and Rosewall, where the road from Towednack joins that from St. Ives, is one of the most entrancing of the moorland valleys. Looking from the St. Ives road as you come round the shoulder of Rosewall towards the seemingly immense bulk of Trendrine, you have what I consider one of

the finest road views in Cornwall. It is a view which calls you from the highway to the freedom of the moors. Coming on you as somewhat of a surprise after the long, tedious ascent from St. Ives, it is a fine introduction to the landscapes of West Penwith, assuming that you are approaching for the first time from the north-east—that is, in a direction contrary to the route which we have been following in this chapter.

When you set out to walk on the moors in the grey, soft weather which is so usual in the county, provide yourself with a compass, whereby you may direct your course. In a thick sea-mist, with a very narrow range of visibility, and one stone wall just like another, and the paths leading nowhere, and the pixies driving you in a mazed bewilderment round and rou , thank Heaven for the needle. And yet—dare I tell it?—I have known the needle, perverted by some devilish, erratic, bewitched magnetism, depolarized and vagrant, pointing to a false north: at least I cannot account in any other way for a certain experience on Watch Croft. Small in extent as they are, and in few places absolutely trackless, it is possible to get inconveniently lost on these hills, and very easy to lose the right path.

I have no time to speak of the lesser moorlands, the strips and stretches of marshy ground, with dark pools and clear tinkling streams, that lie between the fields. Here you may bag duck and snipe, woodcock and teal, and the very rarity and sudden appearance of your game will give your sport the flavour that true sport should have.

And now for my little discourse, or digression, if you prefer to call it so, on the ancient game.

A DISCOURSE ON HURLING

Across the slopes of the moors, and through the fields beneath them, the men of Cornwall used to play their game of hurling; the manliest, most glorious and exciting game that was ever played in Britain. It was an Homeric game, a game for heroes: your soccer and your rugger, your bat and ball, are not in it with hurling. It produced, or helped to produce, strong, resourceful and daring men; good fellows with a love of fair play and no fear of hard knocks. Together with many other jolly things, it was gradually suppressed by the preaching of sour sectarians: a preaching so alien to the fine rough old Cornish spirit that its growth and bitter blossoming in western soil is one of the most notable examples of the malign power of novelty (the missioner's chief asset). I am going to transcribe Carew's account of the game in its Elizabethan prime:

He describes, first, the mere playground pastime of "hurling to goals." In this "there are fifteen, twenty or thirty players . . . chosen out on each side, who strip themselves into their slightest apparel, and then join hands in rank one against another. Out of these ranks they match themselves by pairs, one embracing another, and so pass away; every of which couple are specially to watch each other during the play.

"After this, they pitch two bushes in the ground, some eight or ten feet asunder; and directly against them, ten or twelve score off, other twain in like distance, which they term their goals. One of these is appointed by lots to the one side, and the other to his adverse party. There is assigned for their guard a couple of their best stopping hurlers; the residue draw into the midst between both goals, where some indifferent

person throweth up a ball, the which whoso can catch and carry through his adversary's goal hath won the game." (The hurling ball was of solid wood, about three inches in diameter, and usually covered with silver plates, sometimes gilt). "But therein consisteth one of Hercules's labours; for he that is once possessed of the ball hath his contrary mate waiting at inches, and assaying to lay hold upon him. The other thrusteth him in the breast with his closed fist, to keep him off; which they call butting, and place in well doing the same no small point of manhood."

That was a good game, no doubt; but nothing to the grand hurling, "hurling to the country," which he now describes:

"Some two or more gentlemen do commonly make this match, appointing that on such a holiday they will bring to such an indifferent place, two, three, or more parishes of the east or south quarter, to hurl against so many other of the west or north. Their goals are either those gentlemen's houses, or some towns or villages three or four miles asunder, of which either side maketh choice, after the nearness to their dwellings. When they meet, there is neither comparing of numbers nor matching of men; but a silver ball is cast up, and that company which can catch and carry it, by force or sleight, to their place assigned, gaineth the ball and victory. Whosoever getteth seizure of the ball, findeth himself generally pursued by the adverse party; neither will they leave till (without all respects) he be laid flat on God's dear earth; which fall once received disableth him from any longer detaining the ball.

"The hurlers take their next way over hills, dales, hedges, ditches; yea, and through bushes, briars, mires, plashes and

rivers whatsoever; so as you shall sometimes see twenty or thirty lie tugging together in the water, scrambling and snatching for the ball. A play (verily) both rude and rough, yet such as is not destitute of policies, in some sort resembling the feats of war; for you shall have companies laid out before . . . to encounter them that come with the ball . . . Again, other troops lie hovering on the sides, like wings, to help or stop their escape; and where the ball itself goeth, it resembleth the joining of the two main battles; the slowest footed, who come lag, supply the show of a rear-ward; yea, there are horsemen placed also on either party (as it were in ambush), and ready to ride away with the ball, if they can catch it at advantage. But they may not so steal the palm: for gallop any one of them never so fast, yet he shall be surely met at some hedge corner, cross lane, bridge or deep water (which by casting the country they know he must needs touch at): and if his good fortune guard him not the better, he is likely to pay the price of his theft with his own and his horse's overthrow to the ground. Sometimes the whole company runneth with the ball seven or eight miles out of the direct way which they should keep. Sometimes a footman getting it by stealth, the better to escape unespied, will carry the same quite backwards, and so at last get to the goal by a windlass; which once known to be won, all that side flock thither with much jollity; and if the same be a gentleman's house, they give him the ball for a trophy, and the drinking out of his beer to boot.

"The ball in this game may be compared to an infernal spirit; for whosoever catcheth it fareth straightways like a mad man, struggling and fighting with those that go about to hold him; and no sooner is the ball gone from him, but he

resigneth this fury to the next receiver, and himself becometh peaceable as before. I cannot well resolve, whether I should more commend this game for the manhood and exercise, or condemn it for the boisterousness and harms which it begetteth; for as on the one side it makes their bodies hard, strong and nimble, and puts a courage into their hearts to meet an enemy in the face, so on the other part it is accompanied with many dangers . . . for proof whereof, when the hurling is ended, you shall see them retiring home, as from a pitched battle, with bloody pates, bones broken and out of joint, and such bruises as serve to shorten their days; yet all in good play, and never attorney nor coroner troubled for the matter."

I do not believe that so delightful if lengthy a quotation needs any excuse.

Old Camden said: "Cornwall is happy not only in its soil but in its inhabitants, who were remarkable for their civility in the most early times . . . they were at the same time strong, stout and lusty, their limbs well set, and so dexterous at their exercises (not to mention their manly game of *hurling*) as to bear the prize, in this respect, from all other nations both for dexterity and strength."

This noble game of hurling, blighted by those influences which in other ways besides had so baleful an effect on the Cornish character, declined steadily throughout the eighteenth century, and barely survived into the nineteenth. Edmonds, in 1862, tells us that hurling between parishes "has long since ceased." But the game was still played periodically at St. Ives, where the Toms, Wills and Johns played the others; at St. Columb, where the town played the country; at Truro,

White Downs
C.S.

where the married played the unmarried; and at Helston, where two streets took on all the other streets. At the present day, though the memory of it still lingers in observance and custom, here and there, Cornish hurling is extinct.

Not hedged in by the limits of a field or stadium, not surrounded and watched by fifty thousand bellowing louts, not played between mercenary organizations and by men to whom play means pay, but a game carried joyously and freely over the fields and the moors, all for the love of fun and manliness, hurling was the game of games. I have not heard of any attempt to revive it in modern times, but I wish with all my heart that such a revival were possible. In hurling you have all the freedom and adventure of a fox-chase (but without the fox), all the daring devices of warfare (but without the mess), all the striving and excitement of a great popular sport (but without the congestion). It is a game in which the possibilities are infinite, in which adventure is a condition and surprise an element. If you cry out that it is rough and dangerous, then I ask in what way is it rougher and more dangerous than football or polo? And of these two, the one is for the boorish multitude and the other is for the elegant few, whereas hurling is for every one, and those who would follow the game must be as brisk and agile as the players.

Here's to you, strong shades of hurlers, with courage in your hearts—hard, fine men you were; and a hard, fine game it was that you delighted in! We of to-day, I suppose, are too soft and timorous to match you in a like sport.

CHARLES SANDOE GILBERT

"Sir, he has the art of compiling, and of saying everything he has to say in a pleasing manner."

DR. JOHNSON.

Chapter VIII

Charles Sandoe Gilbert

THE story of that forgotten though remarkable person, Charles Sandoe Gilbert, is both sad and instructive. It is the story of a man ruined by the development of his own talents, and by a fatal desire to cut a figure in society. The immediate cause of his downfall was the publication of the book which provides me with the theme, or themes, of this chapter; a book which is not only a delightful curiosity of literature, but also a veritable conglomerate of information. No excuse is needed for reprinting some of Gilbert's deliciously formal prose, which, for its own sake, as well as for its revelation of a most peculiar character and for the matter which it presents, deserves a place in memory. He writes in the pompously florid style of one who strives after grandeur and, exhilarated by the apparent ease of the craft, revels in the mere richness and resonance of his sounding phrases.

But Gilbert is not a joke. I do not introduce him to you in order that you may enjoy a laugh at his expense. Laugh at his manner you will, doubtless; but you need not laugh at his diligence, at his patient way of acquiring information, at the courage and ardour with which he devoted himself to the colossal labour of his *Historical Survey of the County of Cornwall.*

Gilbert's book is no trifle. Printed on incredibly bad paper, with the plates missing in nearly all the copies, it is a work that must be read by anyone who wishes to gain an

historical knowledge of Cornwall. Before we turn to the pages of this book, it is well that we should give the outline of the curious and pathetic life of the author—at once an inspiration and a warning.

Charles Sandoe Gilbert was born at Kenwyn, near Truro, in 1760. He acquired a liking for the science of medicine at a very early age, and, although he became what is vulgarly and cruelly known as a quack, he seems to have been a skilful dispenser, and his reputation may have been as well merited as that of many a more eminent or more learned man. He joined forces with one Mr. Powell, and it was not long before the pills, drops, plasters, purges, ointments, and cough-mixtures of Gilbert and Powell were renowned throughout the length and breadth of the West Country. Powell, having made considerable profit from these joint concoctions, retired; but Gilbert, who allowed himself to be styled "Doctor," even if he did not rigorously insist on the title, continued to trade on his own account. He grew prosperous, and opened dispensaries at Plymouth and Devonport. His preparations were carried about the country by a staff of six travellers, who did good business among sailors, farmers and fishermen. In every town and village in Devon and Cornwall these travellers came with their pills and potions and boluses; and just as panel patients throng to the rural consulting rooms on market days, so the ailing peasantry would come to the town to dispose of their butter and eggs and to buy a bottle of Gilbert's mixture or a paper of Gilbert's lozenges. Moreover, "Dr. Gilbert" caused attractive notices and advertisements to be seen in all the local newspapers. In his humble way he was distinguished; certainly prosperous.

TRINK HILL, NEAR ST. IVES

But the poor man sought a more evident and substantial distinction; and when he learnt, in 1810, that there was a chance of tracing his descent from the Gilberts of Compton Castle, the poison was already at work. I do not know whether he had previously shown a taste for ancient things, but his wanderings in genealogical fields fired him with a consuming desire to become learned in the history of his native county, and he threw himself unreservedly into the pursuit of knowledge.

The six travellers were pressed into the service of learning. They were set to collect all manner of information on matters heraldic, antiquarian, historical and topographical. Business was neglected, but research met with its due reward; and Gilbert very soon found that he had a mass of material at his command which might form the basis of a valuable historical work. Such a work he produced: not less valuable because the greater part of it is concerned with the records of the old West Country families. The first volume was published in 1817; the second in 1820. Gilbert was not without cultured and eminent friends, and his work was well patronized, but, although his subscription list was long, the printers and binders ran him into an outlay which was about double the original estimate.

Gilbert, alas, had neglected his profitable pills! He had devoted his money and energy to the production of his great book; and in 1825 he was declared bankrupt.

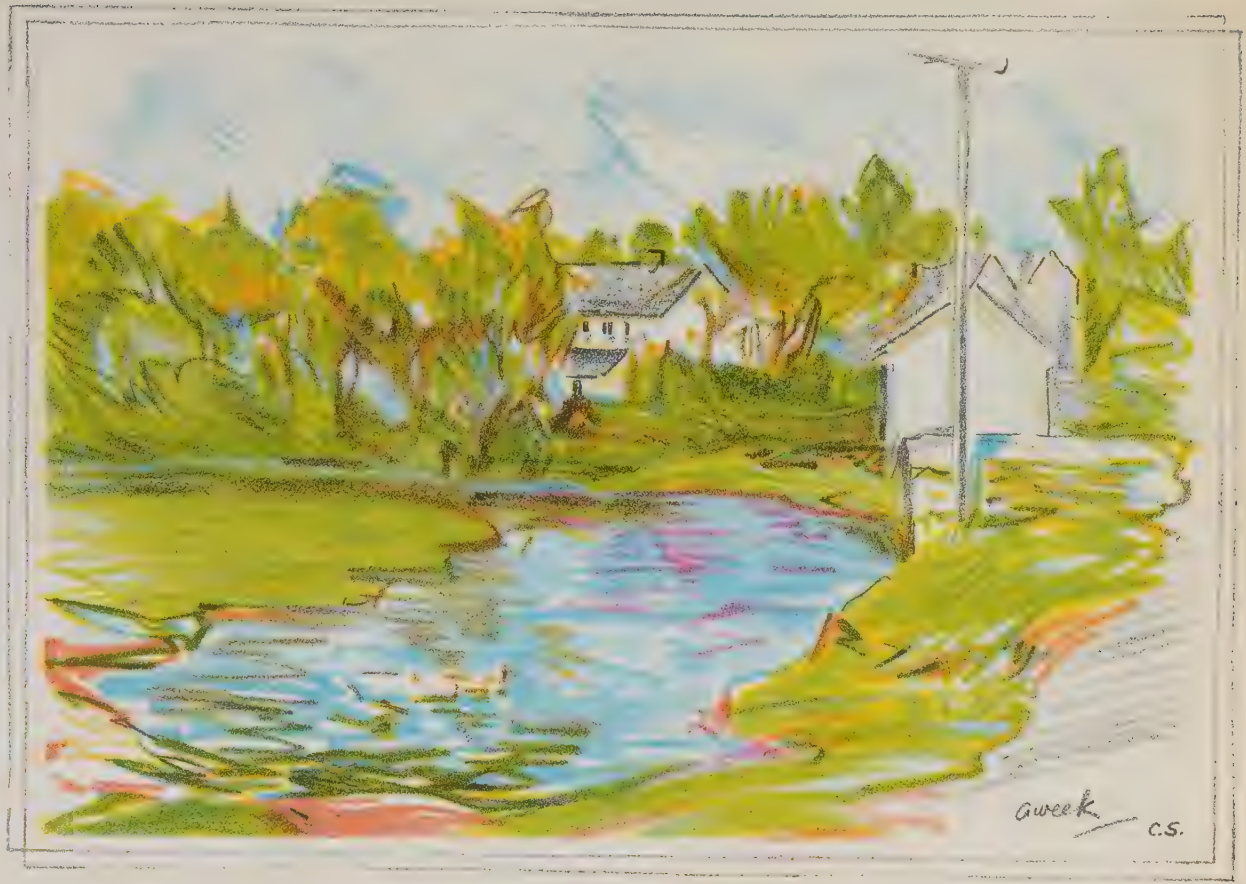
He came to London, an impoverished man close on seventy years of age, and opened a chemist's shop at 27 Newcastle Street, Strand. There, in 1831, he died.

In the dedication of his *Survey*, Mr. Gilbert prostrates himself before his most eminent patron, the Duke of Northum-

PUBLIC
DEPTFORD
LIBRARIES

berland. The epistle dedicatory is a form of literary grovelling which had its uses in the days of patronage, but it reads strangely to us: "My Lord Duke," he says, " several years have elapsed since I was admitted the honour to approach Your Grace . . . a circumstance that will ever be remembered by me with unchangeable impressions of pride and gratitude. At that time, My Lord Duke, you were graciously pleased, in imitation of that august liberality that has for so many years characterized the illustrious house of PERCY, to extend your patronage to my humble undertaking, an honour that I conceive sufficient to stamp its value beyond all other recommendation. Deprived, My Lord Duke, as I am in these distant scenes [Mr. Gilbert writes from Plymouth] from contemplating my Patron's excellencies, I am not insensible of Your Grace's attention towards the Fine Arts, your love of Society, and above all, the general philanthropy which distinguishes your great mind and princely descent . . ." It is an astonishing reflection, that men were capable of this little more than a hundred years ago.

In the Preface, he says ingenuously that "It is much to be lamented that local histories seldom afford a possibility to display that elegance and style of writing, which more general or universal history admits." Few, he says, approach "the correct suavity of Mr. Hume, or the polished and shining elegance of Mr. Gibbon." How pardonable, yet how pathetic, is the almost unconscious vanity of these lines. He proceeds to make a sound observation, which is not without force at the present day: "The study of the antiquities of this country has, by many contemporaries, been conducted in such a trivial manner as to throw ridicule upon what might be rendered truly respectable."


Aweek
C.S.

PONIES ON THE MOORS: KIT HILL

His account of the Spanish raid is marked by a certain reserve, and by a discreet suppression of detail.

En passant, it is interesting to find that his version of the famous song which was sung when Trelawny, Bishop of Bristol, was imprisoned by James II in 1688 contains these lines:

> "And shall Trelawney die?
> There's forty thousand, under ground
> Shall know the reason why."

In dealing with the Druids, concerning whom he accepted the current errors of his period, he evolved a truly ponderous and bellowing sentence, unequalled by the windiest Victorian: "When the curious topographist surveys the colossal masses erected by the Druids, the solemnities of their worship, naturally, rush upon the fancy, and the mind, awed and astonished by the stupendousness of the grandeur that lies around, surrenders itself to those mixed and indescribable emotions which rendered the hallowed seats of pagan superstition not only venerable to its devotees, but awful even to its exterminators."

He has much to say of marvellous happenings in Cornwall. For instance: "In 1680, a shower of grain fell from the heavens near Resprin Bridge, in the parish of Lanhydrock, and some of it was shown to Mr. Tonkin by the Rev. John Hosken, vicar of St. Piran in the Sands, which had husks and flour in them resembling wheat." There are wonderful stories about lightning, and some accounts of lunar rainbows which were seen in the eighteenth century. I have myself seen one of these, looking from my window at Newlyn across the Bay.

He tells us that, in August 1657, "a strange apparition of innumerable persons in white apparel and in the act of hurling . . . was seen in a field of standing corn, near Boscastle, which, after some time, vanished into the sea." And he quotes a long account of Anne Jeffries, the girl who was fed in gaol by fairies, with whose aid she had performed miraculous cures.

The stern moralist emerges when we come to the consideration of manners and customs. "Dr." Gilbert lashes the folly of his age with a knotted thong. "To define the amusements of the present day, so as to give satisfaction to the gay and unthinking," he says harshly, "is a task of difficulty; as what the heedless many may deem amusements may to the wiser few appear nothing better than criminal devices to kill time, or unhallowed sacrifices at the shrine of fashion. Exotic and preposterous habits have arisen, and generally diffused themselves, which are not only at variance with the ancient manliness of the English character, but calculated to undermine religion, corrupt the morals, manners, and mislead all who obey these extravagant impulses, from the paths prescribed to them as rational beings. Such an appetite, also, for luxuries and external show has crept into the country, that health is rarely now found anywhere but in the humble cottages of the poor and industrious, who happily cannot afford to gratify a taste for indulgences; and real comfort, once the great boast of England, appears to be gradually getting out of use." Indignant and terrible Gilbert! What hammer-like blows on poor human frailty! He goes on with a superheated denunciation: "Folly and frippery have usurped the place of prudent management, sincerity lisps on the tongue, but finds no harbour in the breast, and friendship is nothing

more than a name, or the shadow of mean self-interest. Gambling and cards are universal, speculations founded on any bubbles, which involve hundreds, when they burst, in ruin and despair, are the order of the day, and vice, boldly stalking at noon day, finds no want of votaries, in any spot, to second her mischievous operations . . . would that Cornwall might be said

AN OLD TIN MINE: SUNSET

to experience an exemption from the touch of contamination; but even in her uninviting mountains and secluded vallies has dissipation penetrated; and though so far distant from the centre of fashion, it is not less polished, to use a fashionable phrase, than other counties which enjoy a nearer propinquity." With this searing emphasis on the word "polished" he stays his furious arm. His picture of polished fripperies, and even

worse things, invading the "uninviting mountains" of Cornwall is enough to make any moralist start and stare.

We get a clue as to the basis of Gilbert's iron intolerance in a later passage, where he records with fanatic satisfaction that "the spirit of sport has evaporated," and he goes on to tell us that "the constant pursuits of steady labour"—mind, he is speaking of the "lower classes"—"have nearly banished the traditional seasons of vulgar riot and dissipation." Feasts were only observed in a half-hearted way. "A proper knowledge of the truths of religion, and a due observance of its precepts, have been universally diffused among them, and by the Wesleyan methodists, under its soul subduing power, the habits of inordinance are gradually fading away, barbarous practices are vanquished, and the whole character is humanized, dignified, and exalted." Humanized? Heaven save us from the humanity of Charles Sandoe.

One Mr. Warner, he tells us, was greatly struck by the beauty of the Cornish women of the lower classes, and he was informed that this was in great part due to the fact that they ate large quantities of pilchards. Gilbert remarks quaintly that "a similar plumpness of form and delicacy of the external article" was noticed on the Malabar coast, where the people were noted fish-eaters. Speaking of the dark-haired and dark-eyed Cornish folk, he expresses the opinion that they are descendants of the "Cadizians," whose language was derived from the Hebrew or Chaldee, "the original language of man." He gives a list of "remarkable characters," and rounds it off with a number of people whose only claim to distinction seems to rest in the fact that they were deaf and dumb.

Like Dr. Borlase, he makes the mistake of calling Castle-an-

Dinas "the most westerly mountain in England." (The hill of Watch Croft, between Zennor and Morvah, is considerably higher). He mentions the unforgivable "gothic tower" (Vandal's tower it might well be termed) which was built on the top of the hill by John Rogers of Treasowe, and which, though "in a state of decay" a hundred years ago, is unfortunately still there.

It is interesting to learn that "the greater part of the movable commodities of Cornwall" was carried by mules and pack-horses. Oxen were largely used for ploughing, and for drawing a cart which was known as the ox-butt. Most of the roads were bad. He wonders why it is that "in a county, replete with iron, no use is made of it for rail-roads. Wales"—and this is most unexpected—"is full of them, with manifest diminutions both of animal and human labour." I assume that he refers to iron tramways, which were used for the haulage of coal and metals: it must be remembered that he was writing in 1816. "After the departure of the Romans, the Cornish roads seem to have experienced a total neglect, and they received little improvement until the middle of last century. . ." This is true of the roads in many other parts of England. "The roads from Helston to the Lizard . . . are very safe for travelling carriages of every description, and not liable to toll. The road from Helston to Redruth is badly formed and little frequented . . From Penzance to St. Ives . . . the road is badly made, very hilly, and free from toll." He says nothing of the state of the road from Penzance through St. Buryan to the Land's End—probably the oldest road in West Penwith. He makes a plea for better cottages, which shows a spirit somewhat in advance of his period, and which is greatly to his credit.

Under the heading of "Improvements and Suggestions"

A RELIC OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY: ST. BURYAN

the iron moralist gets another chance, and he is not slow to avail himself of it. "How regular, moral and happy," he exclaims, "might the lives of men be rendered, if only one half of the money squandered on costly entertainments and rich apparel, in towns and cities, were devoted to generous and useful improvements in the country! The more virtue and industry may prevail, the more the face of the country will be improved; whilst men of true taste and fortune, in seeking the delights and advantages of a rural life, will not only benefit their own morals, but those, also, of the lower classes." Rather a *non sequitur*, I fear. But listen: "Though this nation has long been governed by fashion, it is to be hoped that the period will arrive when reason will resume her influence, and reduce the number of journeys to London and other cities. These journeys are productive of nothing more than vain and pompous expenses, and strengthen the power of corruption over minds, originally alive only to the most excellent and patriotic sensations. The undertakers of such journeys seem to forget that there is sufficient scope in the country to exercise the most fertile genius, without preying on others. Agriculture is the most ancient and honourable of all employments." Thus the austere Gilbert would have his fellows renounce the sinful joys of Babylon; he would have them regain their "excellent and patriotic sensations," and find scope for their "most fertile genius" in devoting themselves to the ancient and honourable employment of agriculture. He is not the first to sing of Sabine farms and rural joys, but few have pointed to the paths of virtue with so stern a gesture.

In other chapters, Gilbert appears as a purveyor of information. I have given him a chapter to himself, not only

A Farm near Morvah.
C.S.

because he merits a literary revival, but because he reflects a strange aspect of Cornish life at the dawn of the last century. Already, you see, the purity of Western morals was threatened by intercourse with the fashionable metropolis. Even in 1817 Cornwall was not unknown. Concurrently with this protest against undesirable intercourse he records the "soul subduing" victories of Wesleyanism, and exults in the "evaporation" of the "spirit of sport." Evidently there was more than one force at work.

Poor Gilbert! Within a few years of this warning against "journeys" to London, he was himself destined to resort thither, to set up his little business in Newcastle Street, and shortly after to die there. I am not acquainted with the history of his last years: it is to be feared that they were not happy ones, and that his distinguished patrons no longer gave him a thought. Did he not think regretfully then of the days when he rode over the moors to the Cornish markets, with a pack of medicines behind him—of the days when he was undisturbed by genealogical reveries and by the desire to achieve literary and social fame?

BORLASE AND THE DRUIDS

"They deny'd not the necessity of worship . . . but introduced all manner of impurity, violence, and imposture, and prostituted the sacred office of prayer due only to God, upon Planets, Devils, Brutes, and senseless Images."

BORLASE.

Chapter IX

Borlase And The Druids

DR. WILLIAM BORLASE, for fifty years Rector of Ludgvan, near Penzance, was a most remarkable and delightful man. He combined scholarship of a very high order with a warmth and fertility of fancy that are truly rare among the learned of any age. It is not exaggerating to describe him as eminent, for he was a pioneer in the field of archæology as well as a naturalist of fine observation; and, though his mistakes are now revealed in the light of our fuller knowledge and his conjectures are lightly dismissed, we can hardly attach too great an importance to his labours. Allowing that Tregellas is right when he says that "the worthy antiquary was rather prone to do that which so many investigators have done—namely, to see that which he *wished* to see," we must remember that Borlase saw what others had not the courage even to imagine. If his eagerness and fancy led him astray, they led him astray in scholarly paths; of his deep erudition we are well assured, and his enthusiasm helped to lay the foundations of what has since become an established science.

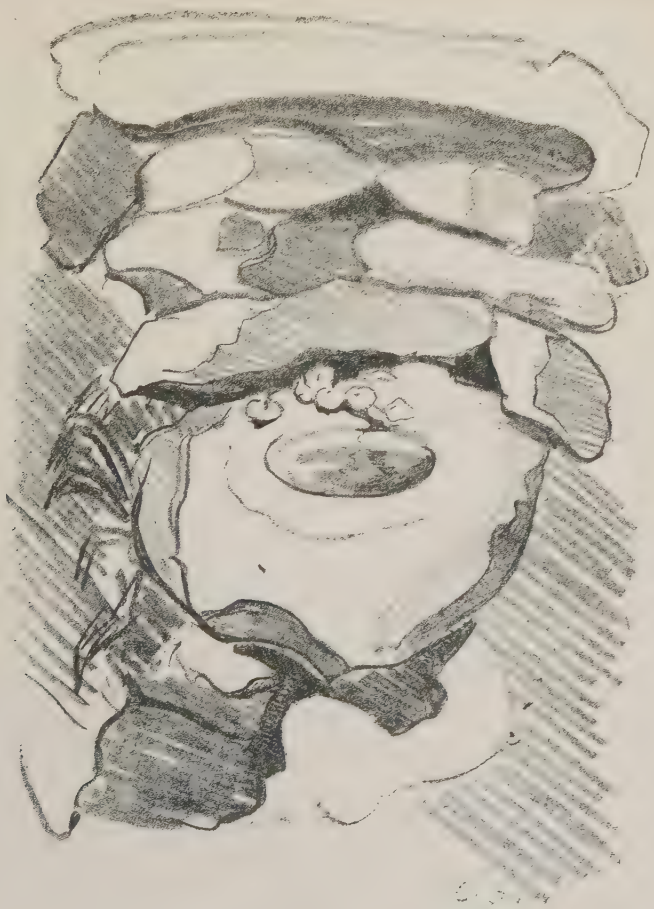
I am devoting a chapter to Borlase through no mere caprice or expediency: he takes his place fittingly in our survey of Unknown Cornwall, not only as one who is undeservedly forgotten, but as a worthy introducer of the aspect of Cornwall which I shall endeavour to show you in the two following chapters.

Borlase came of one of the most ancient and notable of

Cornish families. We find a Borlase representing Truro in the parliament of 1391, and the name occurs repeatedly in the history of Cornwall. One Mark Borlase was M.P. for Helston in 1432. Dr. Borlase was the second son of John Borlase, M.P. for St. Ives, and was born on the 2nd of February, 1695. He took the degrees of B.A. and M.A. at Oxford, and in 1722 was presented to the living of Ludgvan: a place to which he was already endeared, for he had formed a social and literary circle there three years previously, at the age of twenty-four. Ten years after his instalment, his brother Walter, the incumbent of St. Just, died, and the benefice of St. Just was added to that of Ludgvan. In spite of his predilection for study, his joy in exploration and his literary zeal, Borlase was an exemplary clergyman, exact and regular in the performance of his duties, unremitting in kindly attention to his parishioners. As a Justice, he summoned John Wesley (on what charge I do not know), but shirked decisive action, and released him without seeing him. His essay on "Spar and Sparry Productions, called Cornish Diamonds" procured him the fellowship of the Royal Society in 1750. Dr. Johnson said of his account of the Scillies that it was "one of the most pleasing and elegant pieces of local inquiry that our country has produced." His great work on the *Antiquities Historical and Monumental of the County of Cornwall* was published by W. Jackson of Oxford in 1754, and it was followed by *The Natural History of Cornwall* in 1758. He was occupied with literary work until his death in 1772.

It must be noted that, in Borlase's time, Druidism was all the rage. Borlase himself, and his learned contemporary, Dr. Stukeley, were the great Druidists of England: they were

matched in France by a whole crowd of "Celtophile" scholars, who saw the countless stone monuments of their country all



STONE BASIN AT CHYSAUSTER

red with blood and blackened by fire. In some respects, the Rector of Ludgvan had a cooler judgment than his fellows—

as in declining to believe, with Stukeley, that the Druids used a magnetic needle—and a truer sense of the real nature of antiquities. Over "rock-basons" and beneath "stone canopies" the good Doctor loses his head, mistaking the work of nature for the work of man; but there is a boldness of fancy in this which checks derision, and which proves that he had the right spirit.

Ruined and denuded burial places he mistook for "holocaust Altars," and his "Druid seats of Judgment" are purely imaginary; yet he was aware of the sepulchral origin of dolmens, and, though he associates them with Druids, he does not fall into the then prevalent vulgar error of describing them as places of sacrifice.

He had no conception of a people existing in these Islands prior to the Celts. The antiquity of man was undreamt of in his day, and the most ancient things had to be explained by reference to the most ancient records: it would have been alien to the eighteenth-century mentality to have assumed that there was ever an impolite age in Europe, in which the art of writing was unknown. Hence, it was inevitable that the stone remains of France and Britain should have been ascribed to those fierce and shady old men, the Druids. Of the existence of this sinister priesthood there is no doubt, but they belonged to a comparatively late phase of the Celtic Iron Age, and they had as much to do with the erection of the Neolithic stone remains as they had with the building of St. Paul's Cathedral. It is not unlikely, of course, that they may have made a religious use of these stones, but the actual constructions were set up some thousands of years before the Celtic peoples found their way into Western Europe.

Borlase gives a lengthy account of the Druids and their teachings, with a wealth of quotation and a rare mastery in the arrangement of his material. Since he describes a religious element which was present in Cornwall until its gradual conversion to Christianity, and which still lingers in ceremonial fires and feastings, if not in the minds of the people, it may be of interest to give some of his more pregnant passages.

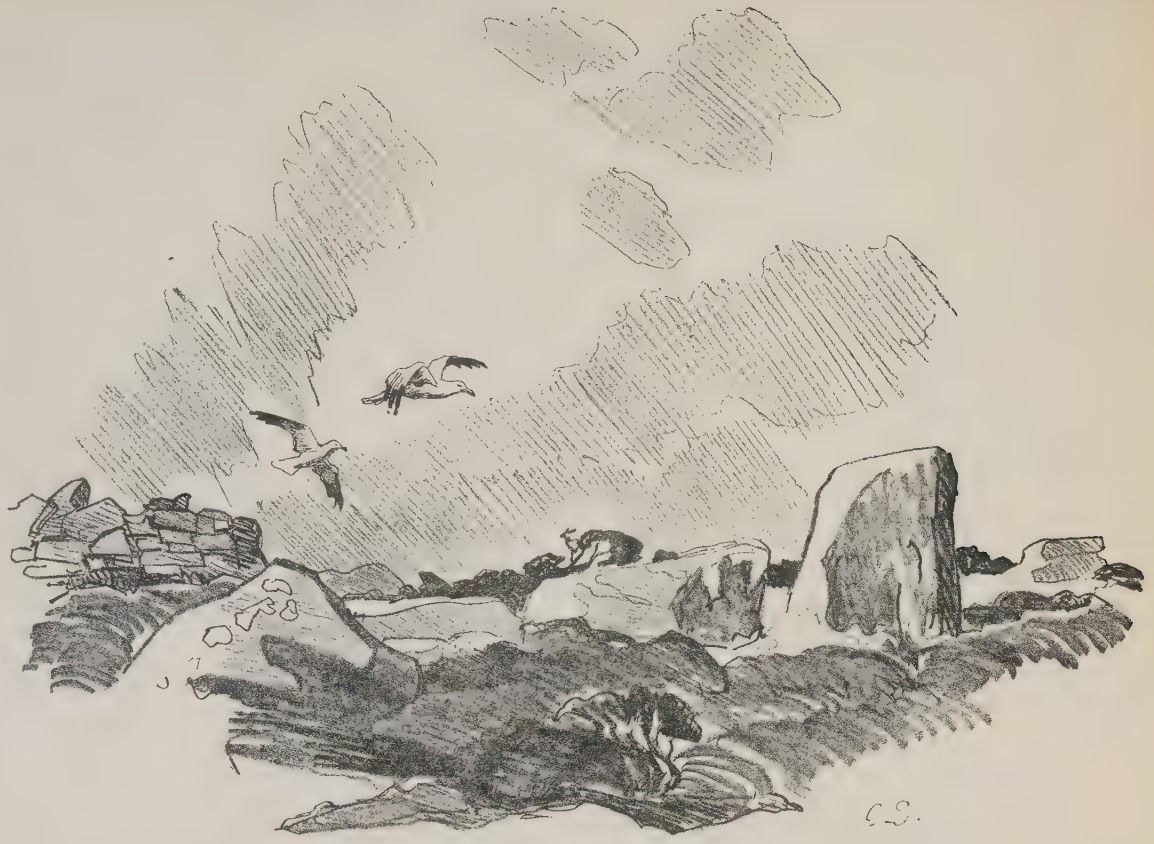
Druidism, he thinks, was a creed evolved in Britain, although the French "are unwilling to own their forefathers indebted so much to this island." By means of research among ancient texts he reveals the power and predominance of the Druids, who were exempt from rates and taxes and from the obligation to serve in the wars. Justice, learning and augury were matters over which they had absolute control. They represented, in fact, the full bloom of priestly tyranny which marks a mid-way stage between savagery and civilization; a stage in which superstition is so compelling a force that the most arrogant of soldiers and the lordliest of chieftains must cower before it, and whole armies are thrown into confusion and dismay by the frown of the high priest. No doubt there are some among us who must think with regret of those glorious times.

"After Christianity came in," says the learned Rector, "the dregs of Druidism had been settling for so many ages, that the vessel was not soon to be clean'd and made wholesome. The idolatrous places to which the Druids more particularly resorted to perform their ordinary superstitions, were rocks, stones erect (of which some were call'd after the name of one particular God, and some of another, ritually deify'd and worshipp'd), fountains, trees, and cross-roads . . . Here they

made their vows, paid their devoted offerings, pray'd for their own safety and success, imprecating destruction to their enemies. Here they brought their incense, their tapers, candles, first-fruits and morsels of flesh. Here they us'd their *Sortes* and incantations; all this they did with great reverence, lighting their candle or torch with great estimation of the light which they took thence, as if some deity had been really there. These rites were perform'd oftentimes where two ways cross (ad Bivia), and I must observe, that part of this superstition is still remaining; for the common people in Cornwall will not be persuaded even at this day, but that there is something more than ordinary at such places; and their stories of apparitions gain greater credit if the Spirit, Demon, or Hobgoblin is said to have appear'd where four Lanes meet; there they think apparitions are most frequent, and at such places it is common for these people travelling in the dark to be most afraid."

This is true of Cornwall and also of Brittany at the present day: it is an aspect of the general sentiment of fear which is in most country districts associated with cross-roads, but is probably not derived from one simple origin.

By ascribing every kind of ancient stone construction to the Druids, and by investing them all with a religious significance, it becomes necessary to account for the presence of so many in such a small area as West Penwith; and since the true and obvious explanation—that they were set up by different races and in different periods—was not available for Borlase, he had to think of something else. As a matter of fact, his delightful ingenuity was quite equal to the occasion: "It must be remember'd that, the ancients were of opinion,



ONE OF BORLASE'S "DANISH FORTS": CHÛN CASTLE

that all places were not at all times equally auspicious, and that the Gods might permit, encourage, or grant in one place, or on one rock, altar, or circle, what they deny'd in another: an opinion, first suggested for the furtherance and promoting of error, and continued for the private gain of these superstitious jugglers; for if the appearances of the victim were not favourable in one place, if their divinations, and inchantments were mistaken, and their predictions fail'd, the fault was not to be laid to the want of art in the Priest, or of truth in the science, or of power in the idol, but to the innocent place." He was a bold and hardy man who first doubted a Druid. But I want you to notice particularly, in this passage, Borlase's own attitude towards the ancient priesthood. He charges them with mercenary imposture. He accuses them of faking the manifestation, of using base trickery and fraud, in order that they might receive their due and proper fees. I protest. The Age of the Druids was an Age of Belief, and in such an age this sneering cynicism, this depraved practice and this vile reduction of the mysterious were out of the question. If the Druids said that one place was better than another, you may be sure that they were the first to believe it themselves. But the Doctor returns to his charge again, as we shall see.

Turning to the ugly side of the Celtic ritual, we are given some grim details. "It cannot be dissembled, that the Druids were extreamly lavish of human blood. Not only criminals, captives, and strangers, were slain at their sacrifices, but their very Disciples were to be put to death without mercy, if they were wilfully tardy in coming to their assemblies. No people could, I think, have wrought themselves up to such a total contempt of human life, and the body of man, who had not at

the same time the most elevated notions of the soul, and the most certain persuasion of futurity; but this, instead of being their excuse, will only shew us how the greatest of Truths may be made the occasion of the most horrid Sins . . ." (Was there a thought in his mind, I wonder, of that dreadful schismatic, Wesley, and the Methodist peril?) "Variety of deaths they had for those miserable victims, as if they had been afraid that they should fall into a loathing, and dislike of such sacrifices, if they confin'd themselves to one particular manner of dispatching them. Some they shot to death with arrows; others they crucify'd in their Temples; some were impaled in honour to their Gods, and then with many others, who had suffer'd in a different manner, were offer'd up as a burnt-sacrifice . . . Some were stabb'd to the heart, that by the direction in which (after the fatal stroke) the body fell, either to the right or left, forward, or backward, by the convulsion of the limbs, or by the flow of blood, the Druids (such erudition there is in butchery!) might foretell what was to come. One Druid sacrifice was still more monstrous. They made a huge image of straw, the limbs of it were join'd together, and shap'd by wicker-work: this sheath, or case, they fill'd with human victims; and Strabo adds, 'with wood for fuel, and several kinds of wild beasts,' as if by a variety of expiring groans and howlings, they design'd to terrify their Gods into a compliance with their sollicitations; to this image they set fire, consuming that, and the inclos'd, at one holocaust . . . Whilst they were performing these horrid rites, the drums and trumpets sounded without intermission, that the cries of the miserable victims might not be heard, or distinguish'd by their friends, it being accounted very ominous, if the lamentations of either children or parents

were distinctly to be heard, whilst the victim was burning . . . intemperance in drinking generally clos'd the sacrificing; and the Altar was always consecrated a-fresh, by strewing Oak-leaves on it, before any sacrifice could be offer'd upon it again."

MULFRA HILL

This is all very horrible, but it is perfervidly religious—closely paralleled, indeed, in modern Africa—and the observances are those of a people whose convictions are logically expressed.

Borlase draws a very just analogy between the Celtic fire festivals and the periodical bonfires which were much in evidence in the Cornwall of his time, and which are still to be seen occasionally at the present day. "Of the Fires we kindle in

many parts of England, at some stated times of the year, we know not certainly the rise, reason, or occasion, but they may probably be reckon'd among the relicks of these Druid superstitious Fires. In Cornwall, the Festival Fires, call'd Bonfires, are kindled on the Eve of St. John Baptist, and St. Peter's day, and Midsummer is thence, in the Cornish tongue, call'd Goluan, which signifies both Light and Rejoicing. At these Fires the Cornish attend with lighted torches, tarr'd and pitch'd at the end, and make their perambulations round their Fires, and go from village to village carrying their torches before them." Edmonds, who wrote a hundred years later, described the Cornish fire festivals in what was regarded by him as a declining state. It is interesting to read his (Edmonds') account of Midsummer's Eve and St. Peter's Eve: "On these eves," he says, "a line of tar barrels, relieved occasionally by large bonfires, is seen in the centre of each of the principal streets of Penzance. On either side of this line young men and women pass up and down, swinging round their heads heavy torches made of large pieces of folded canvas steeped in tar, and nailed to the ends of sticks between three and four feet long . . . Rows of lighted candles, also, when the air is calm, are fixed outside the windows or along the sides of the streets."

Let us now reveal the good Doctor's weakness about rock-basons; not to laugh at his mistake (archæologists of to-day are making mistakes which are probably every whit as absurd, and will appear so to a wiser generation), but to take warning from his example, and to learn the lesson of restraint in matters of conjecture. Speaking of "basons" on Carn Leskyz in St. Just, he tells us of "an oblong cavity five feet long, and in the shelving sides of the rocks adjoyning on both sides, are several

little grooves or chanels about two inches wide, and as many deep, cut into the surface, and running by the side of one another in a vermicular direction; they are certainly artificial, but what use to assign them I know not, unless we suppose them the divinatory chanels, into which, as the blood of the unhappy victim flow'd, either to the West or East, North or South, freely or languidly, into few or many of those ducts, so the fate of the nation, the army, or the sacrificing enquirer was accordingly predicted to be happy or unhappy." This is, indeed, a fancy worthy of the Druid mind itself, showing that the Rector of Ludgvan would have cut a creditable figure as a witch-doctor. But, as I have said, he had the right spirit; and though all these "basons" and "chanels" are caused by the natural wearing and weathering of the granite, still, this is just what the Druids, or any other primitive priesthood, *would* have done !

"The Druids also (as we have great reason to think) pretended to predict future events, not only from holy wells, and running streams, but from the rain, and snow-water, which when settled, and afterwards stirr'd, either by Oak-leaf or branch, or magic wand, might exhibit appearances of great information to the quick-sighted Druid, or seem so to do to the credulous Enquirer, when the Priest was at full liberty to represent the appearances as he thought most for his purpose. The rock-basons of which we shall discourse . . . will make it evident that the Druids us'd this sort of Hydromancy."

Again, you see, the cozening priest turns the augury "for his own purpose."

In the chapter which is devoted to these illusory basons, he tells us that one of their most important functions was the

Tresillian
C.S.

catching of rain-water. He believes that "In the smaller kind . . . they us'd to lay Children, in the larger, Men, for particular disorders . . . The number of these Basons is very great in the West of Cornwall, therefore the Druids must have been very numerous here [!]." Some of these receptacles were twenty feet above the level of the ground: "From these Basons perhaps, on solemn occasions, the officiating Druid standing on an eminence sanctify'd the congregation with a more than ordinarily precious lustration, before he expounded to them or prayed for them."

Then we have a wonderful account of the snake-stone or, as he calls it, the Serpent's Egg, wherein he makes the Druid appear as a trafficker in costly trifles. He gives the following amazing description of its origin from " . . . a congeries of small Snakes roll'd together, and incrusted with a shell, form'd by the Saliva and viscuous gum, froth, or sweat of the Mother Serpent. The Druids say, that this Egg is toss'd into the air by the hissings of it's Dam, and that before it falls again to the earth it should be received in the Sagus . . . Such absurdities did they propagate, in order to set a price and value upon trifles, and no doubt make the credulous multitude purchase them from their own Order only." I protest again against this imputation, so derogatory to the honour of a high priesthood, and so utterly gratuitous. Besides, Pliny tells us that the stone was a badge of distinction, worn by all the Druids, and it is far from probable that an object of such rarity and virtue would be hawked about among the populace. The myth of the snake-stone is widely spread: Carew describes it as made by the breathing of snakes round a hazel wand—"a stone ring of blue colour, in which appeareth the yellow figure of a snake."

Water, in which this stone was placed, became an antidote for stings and bites.

Dr. Borlase was unaware of the universality of stone-cults, and hence the few analogies known to him had an exaggerated value, and led him off on many a false scent. He was convinced that all the stone remains stood originally "under their proper coverture of sacred trees," in spite of the manifest objections.

He says that there were a great many more standing stones in Cornwall in the old days, before his time, and that, to his knowledge, many were carried away for building. At Men-Perhyn, in Constantine, there was a large pyramidal stone, twenty feet above ground, and "it made above twenty Stone Posts for gates, when it was clove up by the Farmer, who gave me this account." Other stones have unfortunately shared the same fate in recent times, and such is the apathy of Cornish antiquaries, and the stupid indifference of landowners, that there appear to be no limits to the destruction which Vandalism and neglect may accomplish with impunity.

Many stone circles have disappeared since his time, and so has the "Bodinnar Crellas," which was presumably a double-chambered hut, the smaller circular chamber opening out of the larger. The Mên-an-Tol and the dolmen at Lanyon have both been re-set since he depicted them, and the wrecking of the great dolmen of Zennor dates from a post-Borlasian epoch.

The Doctor occasionally undertook excavations which, though by no means the earliest of their kind on record, are among the first which were carried out by a man of eminent learning, and are therefore of peculiar interest.

There were two erect stones standing ten feet apart in Madron parish, and a digging was carried out between them on

the 20th of October, 1752. They found an oblong pit: "near the bottom it was full of black greasy earth, but no bone to be seen." An interesting account is given of the excavation of a Bronze Age barrow at Trelowarren (near a creek of the Helford River) in 1751, and Borlase relates how he dug out several barrows in the Scilly Islands, finding little but "some strong

BURIAL MOUNDS

unctuous Earths, of different colours from the natural, which smelt cadaverous"—very likely burnt soil mingled with charcoal. He also conducted a digging in the kist of the ruined dolmen on Mulfra Hill (which must have been rather a ticklish proceeding), and of this he gives a careful record which, though archæologically sterile, is a model of scientific accuracy: "In digging, one foot was very black, the natural upper soil, we then came to a whitish, cinereous-coloured stiff clay, two inches in depth, then a thin stratum of yellow clay mix'd with

gravel, four inches deep; then a flat, black, greasy loom, mix'd in and throughout, more or less, with the yellow natural clay ten inches in depth, under which appeared the hard, natural, stony stratum which lies on the Karn, not mov'd since the deluge." Another excavation was made beneath Lanyon Quoit, where he found disturbed black earth, but ceased operations when he heard from the gentleman on whose land it stood that the whole area had been dug out some years previously, as the sequel to a dream: indeed, it appeared that the cavity had been rifled more than once, but that "nothing was found more than ordinary." I should like to know precisely what he meant by "ordinary." He describes many stones "designedly put" near this dolmen, of which stones there are no traces at the present day.

The Doctor's supreme flight takes place in a description of rocks at Carn Boscawen, in which every single thing that he mentions (with the possible exception of the "holy Circle," which I cannot trace) is a natural object. This description is worthy of quotation at length:

"The mind can hardly frame of itself a scene more striking and awful than this [the stone throne and "Canopy"] must be to all persons, who came hither for judgement, or instruction; nor more suitable to the superstition of the Druids, nor more likely to promote the delusions of all that were to be initiated into the mysteries, or introduc'd into the presence of the Chief Priest: we may fancy, with some probability, that, when any person of more than ordinary figure was to be admitted, he was to be conducted first round the holy Circle (of which the remains are still to be seen on the brow of the hill above); that as he descended, he was to be sprinkled and purify'd at

proper pauses, and stations, by the heavenly waters which the Rock-basons (very numerous here) contained: as he descended farther, passing along between the sacred Obelisks (of which some are still to be seen) he looses sight of everything, but of vast Rocks on either side, above, and below, and the immense ocean before him, till being got about half way down this steep and craggy Cliff, doubtful whither he was to be led, he is surpriz'd with this Throne, which has something so truly grand and simple in it's supporters and Canopy, that it almost leaves us uncertain, whether it be the work of Nature, or of Art. Between the supporters sits the venerable Chief Druid, his Tiara on his head, his holy vestments on, his Scepter in his hand, all these decorated with the *Insignia* of his Order, and every where round him the most stupendous Rocks. A few paces below this Throne is an Area of about 12 feet in diameter, clear'd of the Rocks, from whence the person introduc'd with his attendants might well hear the Precepts of the Druid without violating his Dignity by too familiar an approach."

A passage like this, although we smile at its exuberance, makes us wish that the good Doctor were right, and that we could share his belief, with the assurance that such scenes really did take place among the Cornish rocks. At any rate, it is a passage in which the sentiment of primitive cult is very strongly realized, and though its details are entirely fanciful they are not valueless, for they are evolved from the mind of one who was deeply imbued with the nature of his subject.

William Borlase was one of those serene, pleasant figures, gracious and learned, happily not uncommon yet among the rural clergy; a man to whom the placid life of parochial administration afforded scope for the exercise of good and the

increase of knowledge. Like other parish priests, both in England and in France, he acquired eminence in his leisure. Gifted with a vigorous intelligence and with a fervent love for all things ancient, delighting in letters from his early youth, Borlase had the good fortune to be allowed to develop his personality freely, and in a perfectly congenial environment. His was a tranquil life, happily lived in an age of tranquillity. The full value of his labours and the full measure of his enthusiasm can only be gauged if we consider them in relation to his period; a period in which the natural sciences were barely formulated, and in which archæology was regarded as a mere pastime for cranks. He is a fool indeed, and without cognizance, who thinks of Borlase only as the old man who was deceived by natural stones: such is the delight of mediocre minds—to point gleefully to an evident mistake, whilst ignorant of the circumstances in which the mistake was made, and of the overshadowing superiority of the man who made it.

Cornwall has produced many worthies, but none more truly deserving of that name, more pleasantly distinguished, more admirable than Dr. Borlase. He was welcomed in the most brilliant and learned circles of his day, he must have been conscious of the fact that he was taking a lead in his particular study, yet he never ceased to give due attention to the demands of his parishes. Such a man is worth a score of your meteoric admirals or rocketing warriors or flashing beaux. There are no men more gracious or of more solid value than gentlemen of learning; and for types of these—not fearing the comparison—I would take John Evelyn and William Borlase.

BEFORE HISTORY

"To go and see a druidical temple is only to see that it is nothing, for there is neither art nor power in it; and seeing one is quite enough." DR. JOHNSON in 1773.

"All that is really known *of the ancient state of Britain is contained in a few pages."* DR. JOHNSON in 1778.

Chapter X

Before History

IN walking through Cornwall (and walking, as I have said, is the only way of getting to know that marvellous land), you are continually brought into contact with the traces of prehistoric man. In the Land's End district, you are nearly always in sight of them: longstones, barrows, cairns, dolmens, circles and huts, ancient fortresses and fortified promontories. For many of us, the charm of Cornwall is most vividly manifest in these ancient stones; and, though I must not allow my predilections as an archæologist to get the better of my duty towards my publishers and readers as the writer of a book which is intended for general consumption, I am convinced that nothing is more distinctly and essentially a part of the impression which Cornwall makes on the minds of those who know her than the sense of venerable mystery which the prehistoric remains do certainly convey, even to the most heedless. Moreover, these things have inspired our artist to produce some of his best and most effective drawings.

Man is but a momentary aggregation of particles, gathered together for a relatively infinitesimal space of time. But he is able to express himself in forms that are comparatively enduring. In times that seem incredibly remote to those who are unacquainted with the facts of prehistory, a mere 6000 years ago perhaps, people were setting up great stone tombs in Cornwall, erecting longstones, and marking out circles. Two or three thousand years later, another race of people—

the first Celtic immigration—introduced a new kind of sepulchre, a multiple sepulchre with a domed covering. Then came the folk who built clusters of stone huts within ramparts;

MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PREHISTORIC REMAINS IN WEST PENWITH

and later still, inside the measure of history, the Age of the Saints, with its sculptured crosses, holy wells and oratories and altars. In this chapter, we shall concern ourselves with the earliest remains. But, first of all, a few explanations.

It is probable that the earliest traces of man in Cornwall, apart from his flint implements, are the dolmens, longstones and circles. If you are not versed in archæology, you may ask, What is a dolmen ? A dolmen is a big stone burial chamber, formed by setting slabs of stone on end, in such a way that the space enclosed by them is roughly square or oblong, and then by covering this enclosure with a massive stone cover or capstone—sometimes, but rarely, with more than one. The space thus enclosed was a tomb, in which the illustrious dead were deposited, together with such household goods, weapons and ornaments as became their rank. Cornish dolmens are known colloquially as "quoits." It is assumed that these constructions were invariably covered by a large mound of earth and stones, that this covering has been worn or washed away in the vast majority of cases, and that the dolmen itself, as we usually see it, resisting destruction by its weight and massive form, is the exposed core or centre of a great tumulus. We do not all concur in this opinion, at least in its uncompromising form, but it is likely that it does apply to most instances. At one time, these stone chambers were known as "cromlechs," and that word is still popular, though it is no longer scientifically used in this connection. "Cromlech" is properly applied to a stone circle, or to a stone monument (not necessarily sepulchral) of circular plan.

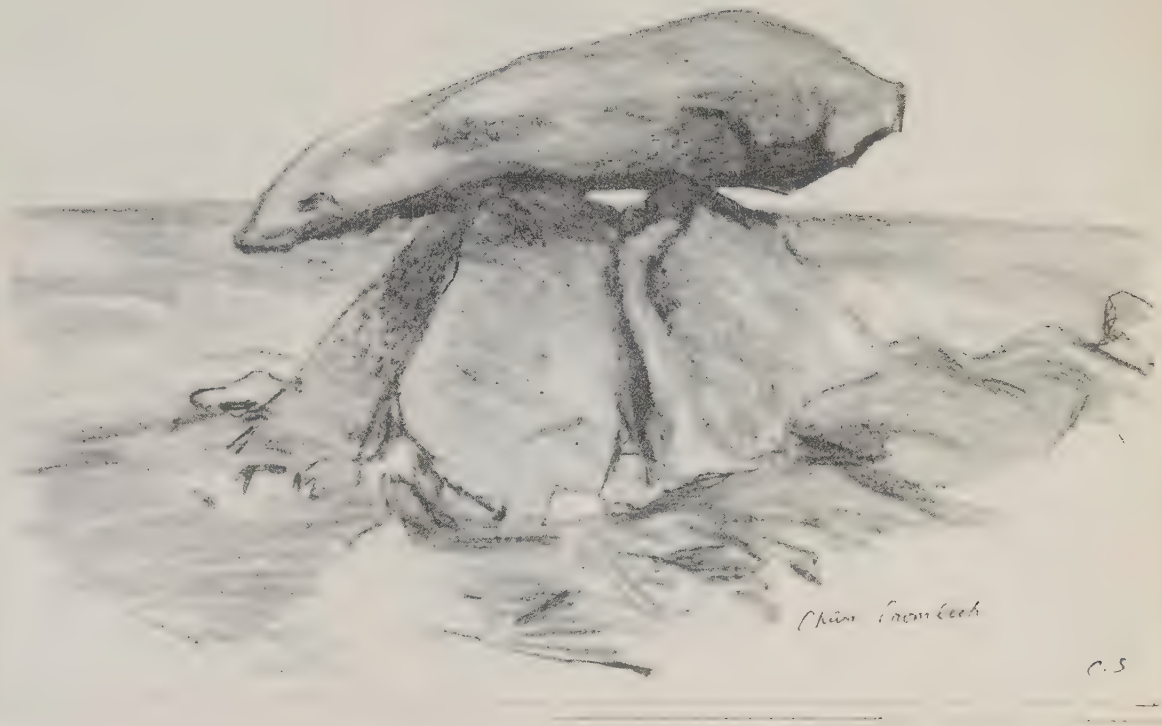
One of the most impressive of the Cornish dolmens is that of Trevethy, near St. Cleer—about two and a half miles north of Liskeard. This is the principal standing dolmen outside the Land's End district, or West Penwith, and is remarkable for the fact that it had originally seven supporting slabs or side-stones (now there are only six in position) and for the

curious perforation through the covering stone near one of its edges.

In West Penwith, an area which is better stocked with prehistoric remains than any other area of equal extent in the kingdom, there are five very interesting dolmens, though only one of them is approximately intact—that of Chûn.

The dolmen of Chûn, whereof the form is admirably conveyed to you by the drawing, stands about 300 yards to the west of Chûn Castle, a hill-fortress some five miles in a straight line north-west of Penzance, mid-way between the roads to Pendeen and Morvah. It is best found by leaving the former road at Woon Gumpus Common and then striking across the moorland: the dolmen is visible against the skyline for a considerable distance. The stone of which this and most of the other remains are constructed is the hard, grey, coarsely porphyritic granite of the moors—"moorstone" as Borlase and the older writers used to call it. The dolmen is placed on a little green hillock which, at certain times, stands out very clearly from the surrounding level of the heath. In plan, the kist or burial chamber is almost square: the four slabs which enclose it, though apparently undisturbed by man, are now sharply inclined inwards, and the collapse of the whole structure, if it receives no attention, is probably only a matter of time.

Chûn dolmen was examined by William Copeland Borlase in 1871. Copeland Borlase is the only Cornish antiquary worthy of note since his great forerunner, the Rector of Ludgvan, and practically the only man who has undertaken serious archæological research in the county in modern times. He found the barrow or cairn, the original covering of the dolmen, very much more in evidence than it is now, for in some



places it nearly reached the top of the side-stones. He gives the diameter of the base of the mound as 32 feet, and says that it was originally "hedged round by a ring of upright stones." Somewhere among the stones of the cairn he found a single piece of flint.

ZENNOR QUOIT

Although not a large specimen, Chûn Quoit is a deeply impressive and most beautiful relic. It is one of a group of three fine things which are spaced out within a short distance of each other on these moors: the other two being Chûn Castle (one of the most amazing though least known of all British prehistoric remains) and the hut circles of Bosullow.

The great dolmen of Zennor has been described as the largest in Europe; and, though this is hardly correct, it is

certainly, even in its present ruined condition, a noble monument. The side-slabs and terminals, of which there were seven, are monoliths of colossal size; the big, flat capstone has been pushed from its supporters and is now tilted up against them. This dolmen was wrecked by some unforgivable boor who wished to use the stones for cattle-shelters, and I presume that the four stone posts which stand close by were set up by this person. You will notice, too, that there are drill-holes in the capstone and also in one of the side-slabs. What made the wretched creature desist? Possibly the weight of local opinion, for we are told that an old inhabitant of Zennor said that these stones were put up about the time of the creation of the world, and that no one could succeed in removing them.

It is not easy to find one's way to Zennor Quoit, and the one-inch map marks it in a very uncertain manner. Moreover, the Quoit is not conspicuously placed, and is not readily "picked up" from a distance. A somewhat long walk is necessary, branching off the Penzance-Zennor road at Trewey Common, and then bearing north-east towards Zennor Hill. In Dr. Borlase's drawing, the capstone is shown lying in a perfectly horizontal position on the top of the kist, while there is a great pile of stones covering the base of the construction and reaching for some distance up the sides of it. Borlase's drawings, or at any rate the engravings made from them, are far from accurate in detail, but as records of main features they are valuable indeed.

Mulfra Quoit is fairly conspicuous, for it stands almost on the summit of the Bald Hill, and is a very strongly marked object. As you will see if you look at the drawing in the pre-

ceding chapter, the capstone seems to have had one of its supporters knocked from under it; though it is possible, of course, to assume that there never was a fourth upright, and that the dolmen was left incomplete—but that is not very likely. Be that as it may, the capstone is at present tilted at a steep angle against one of the supports. It will be remembered that Dr. Borlase carried out an excavation beneath it: a deli-

ZENNOR QUOIT IN 1750. FROM BORLASE

cate if not dangerous operation, and one that does credit not only to his enthusiasm but also to his skill as an engineer.

The drawing shows us a fine, foreshortened view of Lanyon Quoit, one of the best known, though archæologically the least interesting in the county. It is well known because it stands close to the side of the pleasant moorland road which leads from Penzance to Morvah: it is uninteresting to the archæologist because it is a mere restoration, and obviously an incomplete and incorrect one. There is something so stern, solid and romantic about this Quoit, something so bold and so manifestly funereal in its gaunt outline, that it seems almost

a pity to reveal the facts. But the truth must be told: the stones are over their original site, but in anything but their original position. Dr. Borlase was forestalled here by some superstitious dreamer, and it is evident that the dolmen has been interfered with by "treasure seekers" at various times. You will see that the capstone lies on the tops of three relatively slender supports, and that the thing is a mere pretence or parody of what a dolmen ought to be: where is the compact stone chamber, the enclosed tomb? Funereal it looks, I grant you, but funereal in the monumental, not the sepulchral sense. From Borlase's picture, we gather that the side-stones were more closely grouped together in his time, and that there was certainly a fourth upright. The Doctor tells us that a man on horseback could stand beneath the capstone: to-day its under surface is only some five and a half feet from the ground. Something has happened. As far as can be ascertained, the whole structure collapsed during a thunderstorm in 1815, and it was set up again, carelessly and with mutilation, by the tackle which the Admiralty sent down from Plymouth Dockyard in 1824 for the purpose of replacing the "logan rock" at Treryn Dinas, which had been dislodged by a young fool of a naval lieutenant. Pictorially, the restoration (if that word can be applied to such a villainous bungle) gives one very striking effect: you can see the sky and landscape *beneath* the capstone, as you can have sea views through the ribs and hanging timbers of some ancient shipwreck. That helps to give a kind of dismal grandeur to the ruin. It is very fine, assuredly, to see the stormy greys and browns of the moor through this granite framework, or to watch the sheeted mist roll about it; and yet the thing itself is an imposture. It is

Lingon Quoit
C.S.

like a plumber's restoration of a stained glass window: it holds together, and that is all that can be said about it.

West Lanyon Quoit is probably unknown, not only to every visitor to Cornwall who is not a well-read archæologist, but to the majority of the local folk. It is completely hidden from the road, and though it is possible to see it from Boswens Common, across the little valley of the Newlyn River, its appearance is not such as would attract attention. It is a ruin, too, but a most interesting one. Until the end of the eighteenth century, it was completely covered by its enclosing mound, and its discovery was due to accident. Inside the burial chamber they found a broken urn with ashes, about half a skull, and most of the other bones of a human body, all in disorder. At present, the dolmen is a shapeless mass of earth and stone. Its position is in a field, 340 yards south-west of Lanyon farm, and less than half a mile in a straight line from the other Quoit.

Turning now to the stone circles—the most mysterious of the prehistoric remains—we find that these fall in two main groups: a group of five, spaced out something like the pips on an elongated playing-card over the north-west sector of the Bodmin moors, and a group of four, with a doubtful fifth, in the Land's End district. Outside these groups lie the celebrated Hurlers on Craddock Moor in the south-east corner of the Bodmin hills, and the circle at Duloe near Looe: but this latter, in my opinion, is of a different character, and probably composed the retaining wall of a sepulchral enclosure or a barrow.

What was originally the largest and most impressive of the Cornish circles—the Stripple Stones on Hawkstor Downs, in

the Bodmin group—is the one which has suffered most from the depredations of the unintelligent and from neglect. It stood on a circular platform 180 feet in diameter, surrounded by a fosse and rampart, and contained originally 26 or 27 stones with a monolith in the centre.

Speaking of neglect (a thing fully as much to be deprecated as active vandalism), it should be noted that practically no steps are being taken to preserve the antiquities of the county. Perhaps it would be unreasonable to suggest that old gentlemen ought to patrol the gusty moors at all seasons, but it is evident that some one should do so—some one with intelligence and authority. Meetings and resolutions and tea-table talks are no manner of use unless they really do lead to action. I believe that the most which has been done recently in connection with the preservation of Cornish antiquities has been the comfortable discussion of the Act of 1913. And then came the War—an excuse for many shortcomings. At the present day, in default of information to the contrary, I understand that absolutely nothing is being done to safeguard the ancient monuments. These monuments are being allowed to fall into a disgracefully ruinous condition; no attempt is made to enlighten their owners or to gain the support of public opinion; and one can only assume that those organizations to which one naturally looks for a lead in these matters are atrophied as far as useful function is concerned either by the infirmity of their members or by their ignorance of the facts. For want of a little sense, a little energy, and a few iron railings and similar material safeguards, some of the finest stone remains in the Kingdom are being slowly but surely destroyed by wandering cattle and by foolish men.

Stannon and Fernacre circles, the two most northerly ones of the Bodmin group, consist of a large number of stones of various sizes set closely together. They are about 150 feet in diameter. The Hurlers are a group of three circles in alignment, the largest in the middle.

But the most perfect of the circles are two in West Penwith:

BOSCAWEN CIRCLE

that of Boleigh, close to the road which leads south-west from the head of the Lamorna valley, and that of Boscawen-Ûn, a quarter of a mile from the main road between Penzance and Land's End, and about mid-way between those places—not visible from the road, and hence relatively unknown.

Boscawen Circle, like most, if not all the others in the district, in their original form, consists of nineteen upright stones, all granite, with one exception which is a block of quartz. A large monolith stands ten feet south-west of the centre, tilted towards the north-east, and some six feet in length above ground. Between two of the erect stones in the

north-east sector there are what appear to be the two fragments of a large stone deeply embedded in the soil. The circle stands on uncultivated land at the end of a narrow farm lane. Sometimes I have seen the stones almost submerged beneath a sea of furze-bushes; on other occasions (as when the drawing was made) the ground has been thoughtfully cleared. The bank surrounding the circle was raised in modern times—an exceptional instance of care which one records with pleasure. As they stand at present (and they have in some cases been displaced from their original position) the stones do not form a perfect circle, the group showing a greater diameter of 80 feet and a lesser of 71 feet. (All the circles in the Penwith area are smaller than those on the Bodmin moors). To reach Boscawen circle, you turn off the Land's End road near the top of the hill at Tregonebris, pass along the stone-lined hedge to the farm of Boscawen-Noon (observing in this hedge a great megalith which is probably a prehistoric monument), and on reaching the farm bear to your right along the narrow, deeply-rutted uneven track—better suited for a pony "jingle" than for a car.

No man can read you the riddle of these stones. To some they are places of Druidic session; to others, sepulchral monuments, or temples, or observatories. In view of the fact that such circles belong to a period in which the supremest efforts were devoted to the burial and commemoration of the dead, the best founded assumption is that they were intended for some commemorative or funerary purpose. These are pretty playgrounds for men with theories, and their form is specially advantageous for the astronomer. But the astronomical theories have been demolished, and are now out of fashion.

This very inscrutability, this antiquity for ever beyond the reach of any crude certitude, this simple, evident, definite thing, set up by a race of men so ancient that all we really know about them amounts to relative ignorance—all these elements of the mysterious thrill you as you walk inside the ring of stones.

The circle at Boleigh has also nineteen stones. Its plan is more truly circular than that of Boscawen, but several of its stones are known to have been moved in recent times. Edmonds, whose book was published in 1862, says that three stones had fallen, but his drawing shows only fifteen upright. Both here and at Boscawen the height above the ground of these stones is much the same—three to four feet.

Boleigh Circle is known by the foolish and utterly ill-suited name of "Merry Maidens." This ridiculous name is applied to other circles in Penwith, and arises from a distortion of "Dawns Mên" or "Dance Stone," the modern fable having a distinctly Methodistic flavour, and relating how a number of girls were dancing on a Sunday when they were turned into lumps of granite by the offended Powers. A similar legend is attached to the Hurlers. "Nine Maidens" is another unmeaning designation which is applied to circles in this district.

On the edge of the moor below Carn Kenidjack in St. Just are the remains of two juxtaposed circles—the Tregeseal circles. Of these, one has been wrecked almost beyond recognition, and the other might fairly be described as modern, for it was rebuilt some years ago by a certain eminent scientist and his friends. In the centre of their restored circle they set up a little hut, whence they could emerge at sunrise in order to see that everything was behaving properly. I

believe it has been played with more than once in this fashion.

Boskednan Circle is on the open moorland, little over a quarter of a mile from the superb rocky mass of Carn Galver. It consisted at one time of nineteen stones ; nearly all of these have now been laid low or removed, and the drawing gives you a good idea of its desolate appearance.

BOSKEDNAN CIRCLE

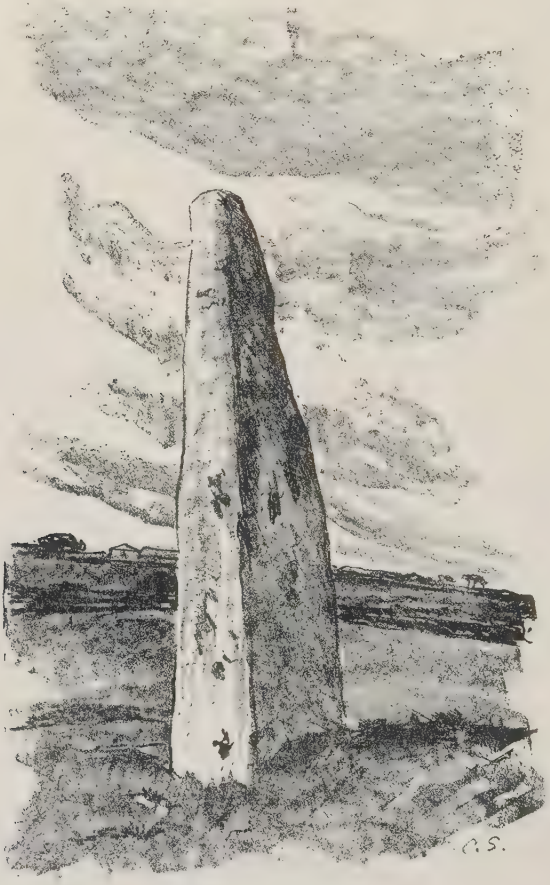
The "doubtful fifth" of which I spoke is about four and a half miles from Penzance on the road leading from that place towards the northern coastal road and the Gurnard's Head. If this was, as I believe, the largest circle in the district, its complete neglect by antiquarian writers is difficult to explain. Possibly it is the circle referred to by Lukis as "Luan Dyche," but he gives no plan of it. Almost a complete ruin, yet showing one conspicuous upright stone by means of which it is easily

located from the road, its position is clearly marked on the one-inch map.

When I attempted to make a list of the "longstones," or "menhirs," in West Penwith some years ago, I found that there was apparently no end to them. I contented myself with listing some 15 or 20 of these stones, and I do not doubt that the list was incomplete, although it included one or two doubtful specimens.

The longstone, or menhir, or standing stone is found in every part of the world: it is merely a big slab or pillar of stone set up in the ground. Nothing could be simpler, nothing more impressive, nothing more puzzling. Like the circle, its meaning is obscure, and it is probable that standing stones were set up by different races of people at different periods and for different purposes. Dr. Borlase recorded a very interesting traditional observance in connection with these ancient remains. "After Christianity," he says, "many continued to worship these Stones, to pay their vows and devote their offerings at the places where these Stones were erected, coming thither with lighted torches, and praying for safety and success; and this custom we can trace through the fifth and sixth centuries, and even into the seventh, as will appear from the prohibitions of several Councils." In Welsh legend, menhirs are associated with the memory of heroes; in some places they seem to have typified the generative force; in others they were regarded either as gods or as the symbols representing them, or as the occasional resorts of the divine spirits. Whether they served as prehistoric guide-posts or as land-marks is exceedingly doubtful. For the same reasons which were adduced in the case of the circles, I am inclined to think that the oldest

longstones in Britain are connected with the cult of the dead, and the evidence afforded by some of the Cornish longstones



THE BLIND FIDDLER

seems to confirm this belief, though it tends somewhat to reduce the estimated antiquity of these monuments. Excavations

made at or near the bases of several of these stones have revealed splinters of human bone, charcoal and burnt earth, pieces of flint, stone-covered pits in which were placed funerary urns, and other relics of a like kind.

Our drawing shows the megalith at Trenuggo, which is close to the Land's End road, about half a mile on the Penzance side of the turning to Boscawen-Noon. It is a fine slab of granite, 11 feet high. A farm labourer dug for treasure near the foot of it, and he found charred human bones, burnt wood, and flint.

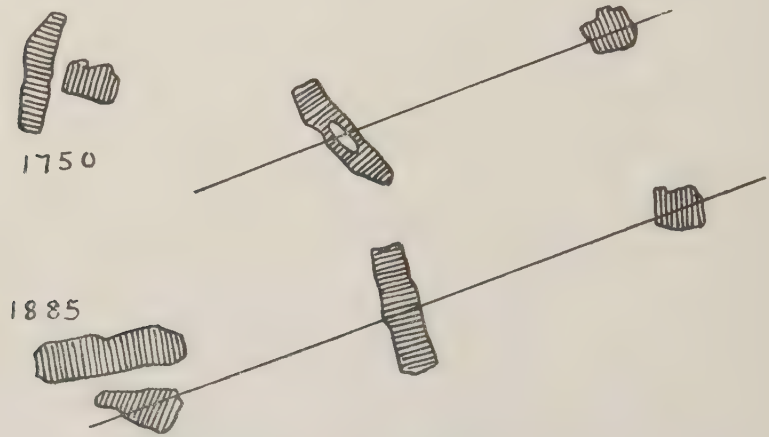
The Mên-an-Tol stands in a category of its own. I need not describe its appearance, because you can form an exact idea of that from the drawing. Its position is on open moorland, a little over half a mile to the north of Lanyon farm, and the same distance to the south of the White Downs.

I admit that the Mên-an-Tol is anything but unknown, but both author and artist resolved unanimously to include it in this book: Simpson because he has archæological leanings and wished particularly to make the drawing; I myself because I do not see how it can be omitted from any book which touches on the antiquities of the county; and both of us (and perhaps this is the real reason) because of our affection for it, and because we have many times crept secretly through the hole for good luck.

The slab of granite with the hole in it is of most irregular shape, and its greatest height above ground is some two feet eight inches. The hole is not exactly circular: it is deeply bevelled inward on the eastern side, and worn smooth on the lower rim. An alignment (north-east south-west) is formed by the holed stone and its two flankers; but this alignment

(which proved a booby trap for at least one very eminent person) is of modern date, and Borlase shows us that in his time the stones were in a different position—laid out, in fact, on the plan of an extended triangle.

In seeking to explain the Mên-an-Tol, people have always had two considerations in mind: (*a*) the stone *must* have been always



PLANS OF THE MÊN-AN-TOL IN 1750 AND 1885. SHOWING THE ALTERED POSITION OF THE STONES

stuck in the ground just as we see it to-day: (*b*) the explanation *must* have some connection with magic. The second of these considerations may be well founded: the first most emphatically is not. I do not for one moment believe that the stone is in its original position or that it has retained its original outline. Exactly similar holed stones are well known to archæologists, and they occur in the sides of dolmenic burial chambers, where they were probably intended to serve as a convenience for the imprisoned spirit. The group of stones here (others are lying

THE MÊN-AN-TOL

on the ground) is evidently part of a ruined construction, and we have positive proof of their displacement in modern times. Is it not more likely that the Mên-an-Tol is a fragment of a dispersed sepulchre, something which it very closely resembles, rather than a prehistoric eccentricity which has no parallel elsewhere? I speak of its origin: it may well have served superstitious purposes, even in prehistoric times, after its displacement.

But in order that you may not be deprived of some charming and ingenious speculations on this subject, I will give you Dr. Borlase's views, together with his account of the practices which he observed in his own time and which are similar to those which we still find at the present day: "'Tis not improbable," says the good Doctor, "but this holed Stone (consecrated, as by its structure and present uses, it seems to have been) might have serv'd several delusive purposes. I apprehend that it serv'd for Libations, serv'd to initiate, and dedicate Children to the Offices of Rock-Worship, by drawing them thro' this hole, and also to purify the Victim before it was sacrific'd; and considering the many lucrative juggles of the Druids . . . it is not wholly improbable, that some miraculous Restoration of health, might be promis'd to the people for themselves and children, upon proper pecuniary gratifications, provided that at a certain season of the Moon, and whilst a Priest officiated at one of the Stones adjoyning, with prayers adapted to the occasion, they would draw their infirm children thro' this hole. . . 'Tis not improbable, but this Stone might be also of the oracular kind; all which may, in some measure, be confirm'd by the present, tho' very simple, uses to which it is apply'd by the common people. When I was last at this

Monument in the year 1749, a very intelligent farmer . . . assur'd me, that he had known many persons who had crept through this holed Stone for pains in their back and limbs, and that fancyful parents, at certain times of the year, do customarily draw their young Children thro', in order to cure them of the Rickets. He show'd me also two pins, carefully lay'd a-cross each other on the top-edge of the holed Stone. This is the way of the Over-curious, even at this time, and by recurring to these Pins, and observing their direction to be the same, or different from what they left them in, or by their being lost or gone, they are informed of, and resolve upon some material incident of Love or Fortune, which they would not have known soon enough in a natural way."

EARLY BRITONS

"After the Scottishmen, the Angles, Englishmen or Saxons, by God's wonderful Providence were transplanted hither out of Germany; a people composed of the valiant Angles, Jutes and Saxons, then inhabiting Jutland, Holsten, and the sea-coasts along to the river Rhene, who, in short time subduing the Britains, and driving them into the mountainous western parts, made themselves by a most compleat conquest, absolute lords of all the better soyl thereof." CAMDEN.

Chapter XI

Early Britons

WHEN you visit Cornwall in search of antiquities, you must take into account the changes in the aspect of the ground which are brought about by the changing seasons. In late summer, for instance, the growth of bracken is so luxuriant that the very nature of the ground is obscured, and some of the stone remains disappear altogether beneath a ferny tangle. One of the ancient hut settlements is periodically swallowed up in this way.

The mild and misty Cornish winter is perhaps the ideal season for visiting prehistoric remains. At this time of year the earth is cleared of its summer vegetation, the huts, barrows and fortresses are no longer hidden by masses of fern and briars; you can identify them with ease and inspect them without discomfort.

Perhaps a word should be said about false or doubtful antiquities. In many cases it is impossible to draw the line. Things of great antiquity have been absorbed into modern walls, hedges and buildings, and converted to modern uses. On the other hand, in areas in which lumps of granite are to be had for the taking, constructions of a primitive aspect are set up at the present day. Ruined prehistoric burial places have been used for generations as shelters for pigs, goats and calves; and the appearance of many a megalithic pig-sty is more than suggestive of a sepulchral origin.

Logan rocks, which for some extraordinary reason are

marked on our maps as antiquities, are simple geological freaks: great blocks of stone so placed that they oscillate, or are supposed to oscillate, when you touch them lightly with your hand. Small upright stones, again, are a cause of stumbling in every sense of the word: many of them are boundary

THE LOGAN ROCK ON TRERYN DINAS

posts or rubbing-stocks or merely extruding natural fragments. There is a story of a round "capstone" which, after it had provoked a great deal of learned discussion, was recognized by an old villager as having been hewn for his father's mill, and then abandoned. And a good instance of a false antiquity is the "ring and thimble" stone in Paul parish (by the roadside) which was erected by one John Price in 1781 to commemorate the finding of a gold ring.

Cornwall has been very imperfectly surveyed from the archæological point of view, and little has been accomplished in the way of real research since the times of Copeland Borlase. But the incompleteness of archæological survey does not apply to Cornwall alone; it applies to the whole of Britain, and it is a matter in which we compare unfavourably with our neighbours across the Channel.

Concerning the first Celtic inhabitants of Cornwall we are not able to make definite statements. As there is considerable doubt as to what really happened in A.D. 1914, you will not be astonished to hear that there is much greater doubt as to the events of 1500 B.C. We know very little about the arrival of the Aryan-speaking people in Great Britain. A vigorous and bumptious race, the Celts still form an important though reduced element in our populations, and the traces of their original culture are widely distributed throughout these Islands. So it is clear that, when they arrived here, they arrived in formidable numbers; although many centuries may have elapsed during the Celtic invasions. The Celts were a savage people, with a horrible amount of energy and a genius for military exploit. They seem to have been a hard-drinking and hard-smiting people, driving back and forth across Europe with the impetus of barbarian fury; and they have proved themselves brave and terrible foes to all those who have set out to crush them, from the legions of Ostorius to the Black-and-Tans.

Those who undertook the Christianizing of the Celts were not lacking in courage. They were taking on a job compared to which a missionary expedition to the Fijians, or to any other modern cannibals, must be regarded as a mere picnic. The

Celts were not only the most barbarous people known to the ancient world—and that is saying a good deal—they were inventive in cruelties, furious in war, head-hunters, fanatic idolaters, worshippers of fierce and brutish gods; armed with good metal weapons, and having all the dangers of folk who retained the old savagery of man whilst reaching a moderately advanced phase of material progress. The classic writers, who furnished Borlase with most of his facts about the Druids, seem to have given accounts, which, borne out as they are by cross-evidence, are singularly free from exaggeration. The attitude of an early ethnologist, such as Diodorus Siculus, towards the Britons of his time is very much like that of a modern English scholar towards the aborigines of West Africa.

In archæology, the expert is the man who speaks doctorially on matters which are absolutely beyond the reach either of proof or of refutation, and then turns a deaf ear to the questioner. I am no expert. I am not going to tell you precisely who built the Cornish cliff castles, and why they built them; who garrisoned the hill-forts; who made pots and smelted tin in the hut-circles; or who placed the ashes of their dead in the great chambered cairns and the barrows: I do not know, and I do not believe that anyone else does. Probably the cairns and barrows were built by Celts of the Bronze Age, and the hut-circles by Celts of the Iron Age: as for the fortified works, it is impossible to do more at present than hazard a guess at their origin. But all these things are associated with the lives of people who may be justly described as Early Britons.

The Cornishmen of the Bronze Age usually burnt their dead, and they placed the ashes in pots of a special kind,

THE " IRON GATEWAY," CHÛN CASTLE

which are known to the archæologists as cinerary urns. These pots were placed in stone coffers ("kists") or on the floors of sepulchral chambers (sometimes upside-down) in the cairns and barrows. The chambered cairn of Carn Brea was a fine example of a Celtic burying place; the great double cupola of Ballowal, near Land's End, was an even more remarkable one. But such burial places abound in Cornwall, from the big circular cairns to the little mounds on the moors. On the plateau of the Goonhilly Downs in the Lizard area—a wonderful, broad stretch of open moorland, once celebrated for a breed of wild horses—burial mounds are more than usually plentiful; they may be counted literally by the score, and many of them are in perfect condition. In the Land's End district there are some fine examples of chambered tumuli—compact, dome-shaped mounds of earth and stone, well supported by massive slabs, with low, oblong recesses. The best is in a field at Brane in Sancreed, not easily found and covered with a tangle of gorse and briars.

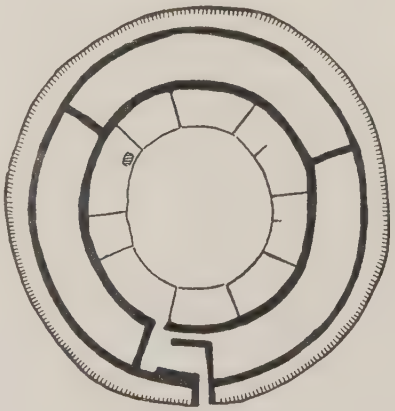
A very interesting quotation from Norden (probably written about 1584) is given in Copeland Borlase's *Nœnia Cornubiæ*. It is certainly one of the earliest accounts of the excavation of a Cornish barrow, and is worth giving: "Withiell, a parishe wherein one Gydlye, not manie yeares since, as he was digging a borowe or buriall hill, whereof ther are manie in theis partes, in the time of the Romish, Saxon and Danish warrs occasioned to be made, founde in the bottome of the borow three whyte stones sett triangularly as pillars supportinge another stone nere a yard square, and vnder it a earthern Pott verie thyck, haulfe full of black slymye matter, seeminge to have been the congealed ashes of some worthy man, ther

Good Moor.
C.S.

committed in this manner to his buriall; the like whereof have been, and are often founde." A quaint, but probably quite accurate description of a typical barrow-burial.

There are the remains of some large circular barrows on Botrea hill in Sancreed, and others on Amalveor Downs, not far from Zennor dolmen.

A hill is a place of strength and of refuge. It is the chief military feature in a landscape. In a peninsula especially, the possession of the hill-tops is a prime strategical consideration; a lesson strikingly enforced in modern times by the gentle yet deadly slopes of Achi Baba. If you have a spring of water on the top of your hill, and stores for your garrison, you may withstand sieges; and if the sides of the hill are steep there is an additional advantage, for should the enemy try to rush the position he is out of breath before he reaches you. One could guess that the hills in West Penwith would be crowned with ancient fortresses, and such is the case.



PLAN OF CHÛN CASTLE

Chûn Castle is pre-eminent among the Cornish hill-forts: it is, in fact, one of the most wonderful though neglected antiquities in the Kingdom. It is about five and a half miles from Penzance, and its position has been described in dealing with the dolmen.

The Castle consists of two great circular walls of granite—

an outer wall and an inner wall. Its gateways face to the west; that in the inner wall is not in line with that in the outer wall, and the way between the two rings of the fortifications is barred by traverses. Thus, an attacking party that forced its way through the outer gate would be penned up between the two entrances, unable to scramble over the traverses, and effectively enfiladed by the defence. There would be no possibility of a rush. This double entrance is a sound piece of military design, but I am inclined to believe that it was not part of the original design of the Castle, for the following reason: opposite the main entrance (the so-called "Iron Gate" which you see in these fine drawings) and now incorporated in the outer wall are two large upright slabs of stone, which may very well indicate the former position of the gateway in the outer ring. If this is the case, and if these uprights mark an original entrance in line with the Iron Gate, subsequently blocked up, it would seem that the present strategic arrangement must represent an improvement on the older design; and it is quite possible that this improvement was made by a successful invader, who captured the primitive hill-fort and turned it into a first-class defensible work. But this of course, is mere conjecture.

The walls are now all in ruins: tumbled ramparts of grey, unhewn stone and grassy banks of earth. A good deal of the stone has been carted away for the building of farm-houses, walls and so forth. You can barely trace the plan of the inner fort : the quarters of the garrison, perhaps, or enclosures for the women and children and cattle. But the well is there—a clear spring of water in the north-east sector of the innermost ring.

It is a strange place, this silent grey ruin on the hill-top, abandoned even by memory. You cannot but feel how it is linked to forgotten strivings and agonies, to the shock of nameless wars; how it is yet grimly haunted by the crying of stricken men, the clash of iron swords, the clamour of the embattled host. But all this strength and fury has passed like the shadow of a dream. Nothing is left now but the ringed ramparts; the sound and movement of life have ebbed from the hill, leaving the old fortress high and dry, as it were; yet still grim, still menacing, even in desolation and in silence.

On the slopes below the Castle there are traces of little ruined constructions. The prehistoric village of Bosullow is some 500 yards away to the north-east, in the hollow between Chûn Downs and Carn Downs, at the end of an enclosed track-way.

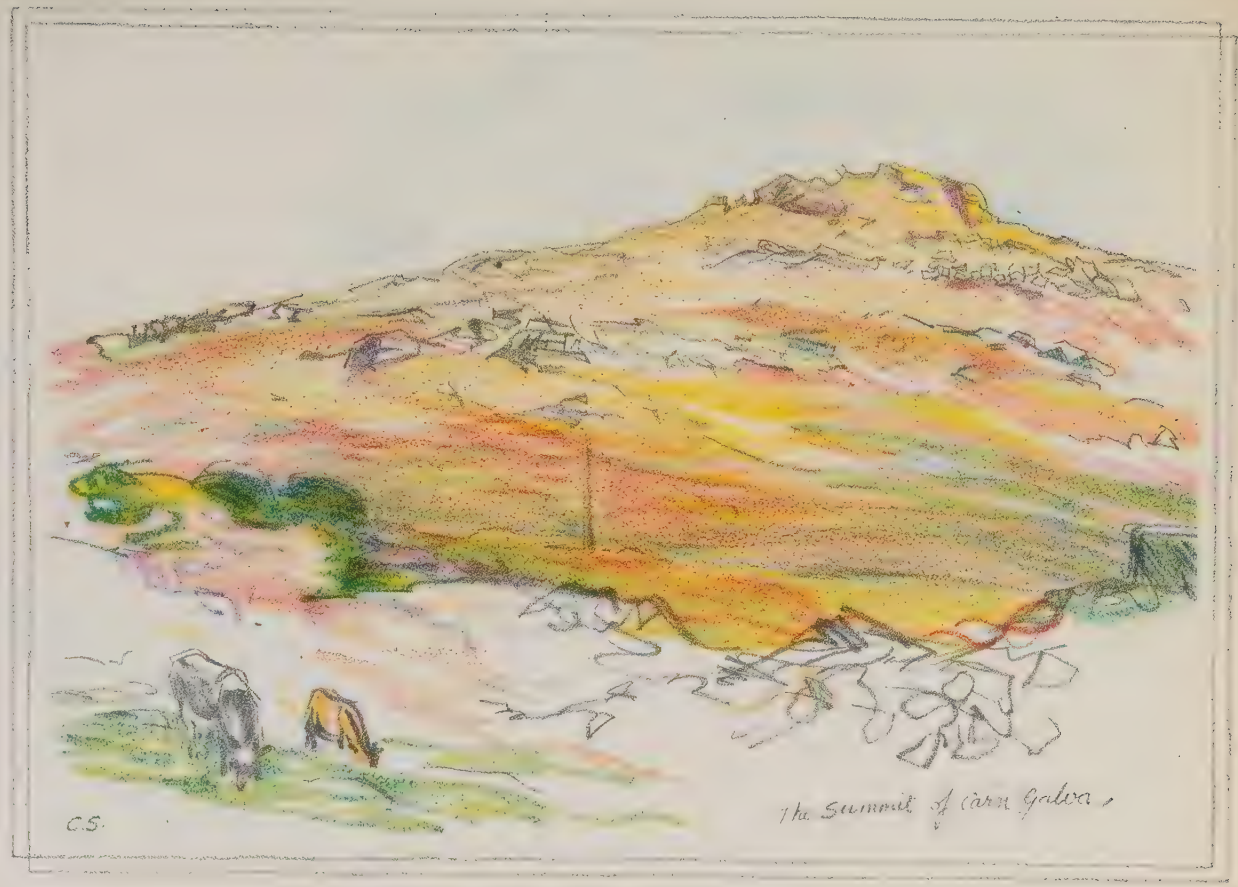
Although Chûn is the finest of all the Cornish hill-forts, there are many others of note. Castle-an-Dinas, about three and a half miles from Penzance in a north-easterly direction, is another example of a circular fort, with concentric walls of stone. Borlase describes it as having two concentric walls with a third, outmost, wall more than half-way round but not completed. He also describes round huts, of which there are no traces at the present day, and he says that there was a well near the centre. It is now sadly ruined, though some fine stone-work is yet to be seen, here and there, in the inner ring. The ugly and incongruous tower which is built on the southern edge of the rampart—built of materials robbed from the ancient works—was set up by one Mr. Rogers: I do not know what excuse he had, or whether this unseemly monument must be ascribed to ambition, to some philanthropic motive, or to

mere folly. A remarkable well is to be found at the end of the track which leads from the cottage on the western slope of the hill (shown on the six-inch Ordnance Survey as "Spring"). You descend to this well by a long flight of stone steps, and there you find cold, bright water of astonishing clearness.

About two and a half miles north-east of Castle-an-Dinas is the hill of Trencrom. It is a little hill which rises with splendid abruptness, close to the edge of the granite area of Penwith. In itself, it is a perfect natural fort. The sides are steep, and thickly strewn with granite boulders, while the top is a delicious green plateau of turf. Two clearly marked gateways, east and west, show the entrances to the fortified enclosure, but little remains of the defensible works. A treasure, they say, lies buried in Trencrom, guarded by ugly spriggans, who rise all howling and menacing from the rocks and cause treasure-hunters to hurry away and take to their beds. I have been told that the fortress dates back to the New Stone Age, but though my informant is a man of profound learning I am by no means sure that his assertion is correct.

However much we may be in doubt as to the builders of the hill-castles (and we must take into account the fact that the hills must have changed hands from time to time, and that the first works were probably modified and improved by the later owners) their main purpose is sufficiently clear—they were defensible positions. But we have to consider another type of castle, the so-called "cliff castle," which is at present beyond the reach of explanation.

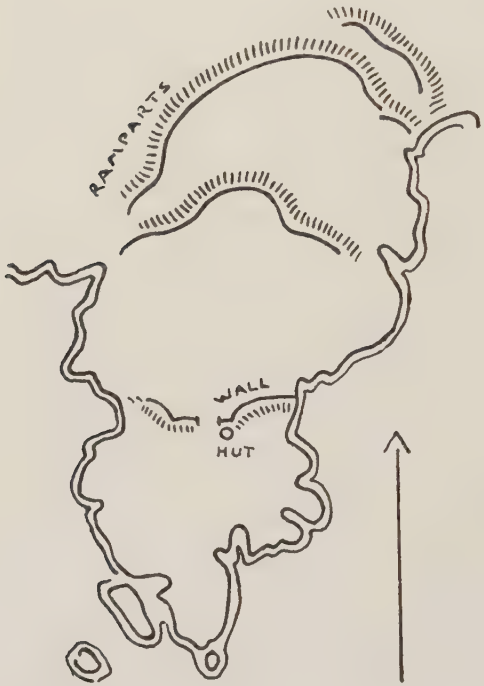
Cliff castles are found in various places on the south-western shores of Britain, and they consist simply of banks,


C.S.
The Summit of Carn Galva

walls and ditches raised and cut across the landward approaches to a headland. By this means, the promontory itself is safeguarded against attack from the mainland: but to what purpose? These defensible headlands were not chosen with a view to naval advantage, for it is impossible, in the majority of cases, either to land from boats thereon or to re-embark. On three sides they fall in horrid declivity to the sea; on the other side, in order to make the position as unapproachable as possible, great semi-lunar ramparts are raised, with a prodigious amount of labour. What was the idea? Old Borlase thought they were made by invaders, in order that they might establish a footing and also secure a retreat to the sea; and other people have thought the same. However, as co-operation with sea forces is plainly ruled out in most instances, the explanation does not commend itself. At best, such a place might be used as a nightly retreat for an invading force; but why such colossal and enduring fortifications? On the other hand, to suppose them "the last strongholds of a race beaten in war" is even more unreasonable, for people who had been driven to the very edge of their coast could hardly have found either the time or the means for carrying out engineering work on a grand scale. Moreover, the number of people who could find lodgment on a rocky headland would be very small. As it is, neither of these two explanations is good enough, and we have to confess that we cannot say what was the purpose of these fortified promontories.

Trevelgue Head, near Newquay, is a fine example of a cliff castle of insular type, with secondary defences on the mainland; but the most impressive of the fortified headlands is that of Treryn Dinas, on the southern coast of the Land's End district.

Treryn Dinas is a magnificent mass of weathered and riven granite (vulgarly celebrated for the possession of a logan rock). It is protected from a mainland assault by great curving ramparts up on the landward slopes, which must have been originally of unusual height, and by a wall carried across the narrowest part of the isthmus, with a gateway, and a little "guard house" just inside it. The ultimately defensible position—the headland itself—is a relatively small area of steep and awkward rocks, on which even a hundred men could scarcely move with safety, still less engage in defensive warfare. Here then, in the case of Treryn, you have the problem of the cliff castle in its most baffling form. If it is necessary to assume that these places were chosen for some exclusively military object (and I do not see why it should be), we are unable to explain that object; but, if we assume that they were not chosen for a military reason, then we are driven to the wildest and most unauthorized conjectures.



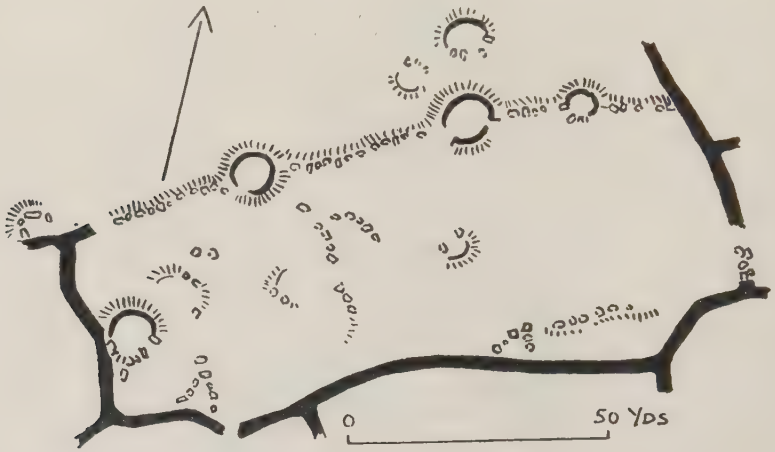
SCHEME OF THE DEFENCES AT TRERYN DINAS

Let us turn now from the warlike to the domestic

IN THE ANCIENT VILLAGE : CHYSAUSTER

aspect of Early British life in Cornwall, to the villages and settlements.

Hut-circles and alleged hut-circles are numerous throughout Cornwall. On the map, they break out famously over the Bodmin moors; but they are not always easy to find on the ground. I believe that some of the finest of the prehistoric villages are known only to jealous antiquaries, who keep them



HUT-CIRCLES DISCOVERED BY THE AUTHOR AT BODRIFTY, MULFRA HILL

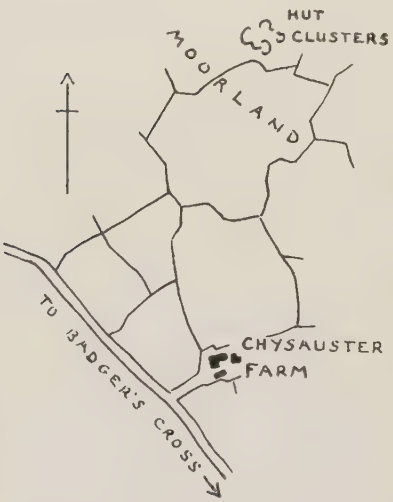
to themselves. Five years ago, as I was walking down the westward slope of Mulfra Hill, after looking at the pit-dwellings which are shown in the drawing, I discovered a very fine group of hut-circles in a strip of enclosed moorland at the foot of the hill. These circles were shown on no map, mentioned by no writer, known to no antiquary, yet they covered an area 100 yards long by 50 yards wide, and the upright door-posts were conspicuous even from a distance. One day I was

showing them to Mr. Morton Nance of St. Ives, who is an authority on the evolution and history of sailing ships and a keen student of folk-lore. We observed an old man cutting furze among the ancient ruins, and it seemed to me that this was an excellent occasion for testing the value of folk-lore. "Let us question this old man," I said, "and hear what he has to say about the hut-circles." So Mr. Nance questioned him. "Oh, ay," said the furze-cutter, " they do say as how people lived here a long time back; they do say as the Romans lived here, a hundred—ay, or may-be two hundred years ago." Now it is all very well to laugh at this poor old man, with his somewhat imperfect conception of history, but when it comes to saying precisely who were the people who lived in the stone huts it seems to me that we have to admit an equally profound ignorance.

The ancient villages stand on debatable ground, in more senses than one. Buildings of a primitive type have been inhabited in Cornwall within the historic period. Some of these dwellings probably belong to Christian times, others to the true Iron Age, and others may, perhaps, be of more ancient date. I should be inclined, however, to ascribe most of them to the later phases of the Iron Age.

The hut-clusters of Chysauster are about three-quarters of a mile due west of the fortress of Castle-an-Dinas, on the western slope of the hill. It is not at all easy to find them, so I give a plan, which should be used in conjunction with the one-inch Ordnance map. These clusters consist of a number of unevenly shaped, more or less circular stone-walled dwellings, of varying sizes, grouped round a central courtyard or enclosure, and the whole surrounded by a rampart of earth and stone.

Very considerable skill is shown in the choice and placing of the granite blocks which form the walls and doorways. The whole place is in a sadly ruinous and neglected condition, overgrown with furze and briars, rough with fallen blocks, and subject to the depredations of straying cattle. It may be that some of the smaller chambers were stone roofed on the "beehive" principle, and that the doorways were surmounted by lintels of granite. Most probably the larger huts were covered by timber, turf and stones. There are two curious stone mortars or basins to be seen here: one of them is now placed in the side of one of the entrances (a holy water stoup, in the opinion of those who believe that Chysauster was an early monastic settlement!) and the other lies—or lay very recently—on the ground.



Excavations were carried out in these huts by Copeland Borlase, who unearthed some black, wheel-made pottery, mullers and millstones, and a bit of melted tin. Other excavations, in 1897, brought to light, among similar material, two very small pieces of rusty iron.

The word Chysauster has been interpreted as meaning either "the houses on the south" (which does not seem applicable) or "the Saxon houses" (more convincing, but less sound etymologically). There seems little doubt that the

hutments were built within the Christian era, but the ingenious idea that they were intended as shelters for a holy brotherhood, though it has something to commend it, is not adequately supported by evidence. Chysauster is a mysterious place, and people who are sensitive to the suggestions of the uncanny claim to have been greatly disturbed w[illegible] its precincts. A

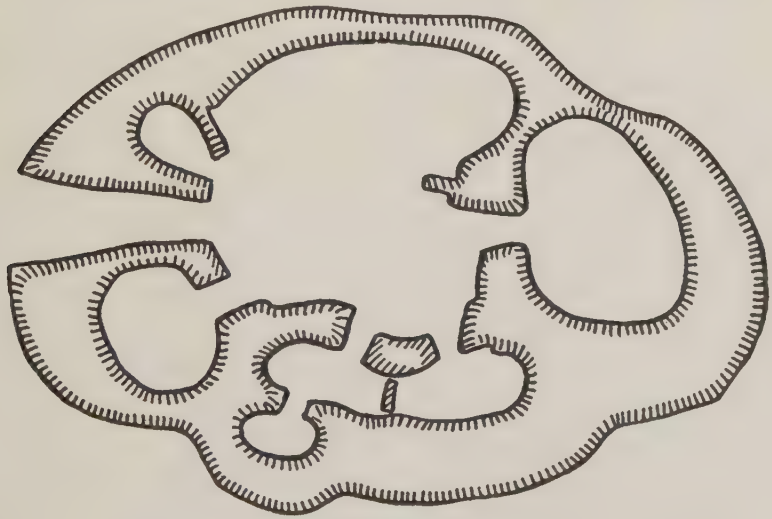


DIAGRAM OF HUT-CLUSTERS, CHYSAUSTER

brother-in-law of mine, deliberately courting sensations of this kind, once assayed to spend the night there; but he was so terrified by strange noises and by shadowy movements that he fled from the place with cold fear in his heart, and was glad enough to find himself back in his Penzance bed. This, indeed, is the common experience of those who visit ancient ruins at night, in search of romance or ghostly manifestations or buried treasure.

You will observe that these hut-clusters are placed not far from the fortified camp of Castle-an-Dinas. A similar case of an ancient settlement within easy reach of a fortress occurs, as we have seen, at Chûn, where the hut-clusters are known as Bosullow Crehyllys. Here are traces of walled roads or boundaries, and evidence of a settlement of considerable size. It is possible that, in both these cases, and in one or two others, there may have been a connection between the building of the fortress and the building of the village. The fortified hill-tops may have served as places of retreat or refuge, as burghs or strong citadels, in times of turmoil and war. Excavation, as far as I know, has not yet been attempted in the hill castles of Chûn and Castle-an-Dinas, though I believe that it is now being considered (and by very competent and proper people, thank goodness) in the case of the former. Serious excavation, carried out in these places by qualified searchers, and also in the hut-clusters, would be of great interest, and would probably settle the question of the relation of the village to the fortress.

Connected, in all likelihood, with the ancient villages are the wonderful underground chambers and corridors—the souterrains or "fougou" caves. These are passages or tunnels, walled and roofed with massive stones, and with side-chambers, sunken huts, or recesses or other passages opening into them at right angles. The longest is at Halligey (Mawgan in Meneage, near the Helford River), which is 90 feet long, and has a second gallery, 28 feet long, branching at right angles from the main one.

The most beautiful of these underground constructions is at Carn Euny, on the south-western slope of the hill on which

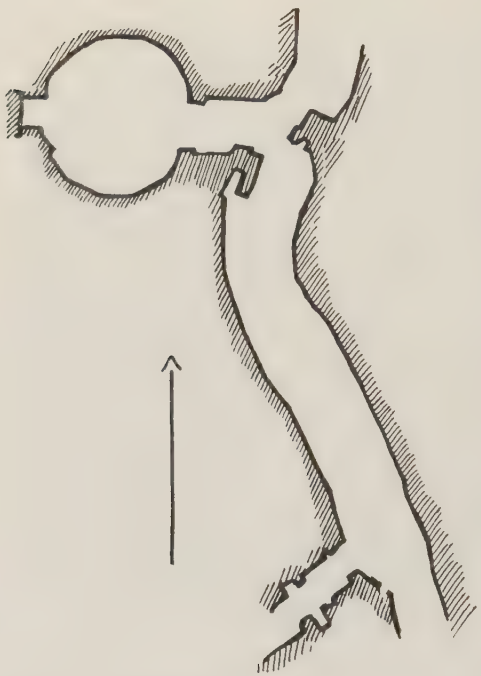
Ancient British Village
Chysauster.
C.S.

stands the fort of Caer Bran, in Sancreed parish, some five miles from Penzance. It is so extremely difficult to find that I can only advise you to study its position on the six-inch map (where it is marked as "Cave") if you intend to visit it.

THE SOUTERRAIN AT CARN EUNY

(You are not likely to find anyone who can guide you, for this, one of the most wonderful relics of antiquity in Cornwall, is practically unknown to the local folk.) Even then, on the very ground itself, it is not easy to find the souterrain. The place is all so tumpy and lumpy, so stony and so overgrown, that the entrance is effectively concealed. Perhaps you will

only discover it when you find that you have walked on to the top of the domed chamber and that you are looking down into a mysterious walled cavity beneath your feet, dimly seen through a ring of brambles. The cupola hut is approached by a narrow entrance which branches off from the north end of the corridor: it is about 14 feet in diameter, and may have been originally about 11 or 12 feet high. Opposite the entrance, there is a curious rectangular recess, rather like a fireplace without a flue. The gallery itself is some 42 feet long, roofed by great slabs of granite laid across it. Simpson has made his drawing from a point near the north end of the gallery, showing on the left the approach to the chamber.



PLAN OF THE SOUTERRAIN AT CARN EUNY

Although there might seem to be some resemblance between this place and the ancient cupola tombs of the Ægean countries, I do not think that the Carn Euny souterrain was intended for sepulchral uses. Copeland Borlase discovered here some coarse red and black pottery, together with a piece of smooth redglaze which he took for Samian ware, an iron

crook and an iron spearhead, whet-stones, mullers, ashes, the bones of animals, a drilled circular stone amulet, and a good deal of partly melted tin: things which appear to indicate habitation, or at least the use of the place by the living. Moreover, he found a drain or water-channel cut in the floor.

In the grounds of Mrs. Leader's house at Trewoofe, at the head of the Lamorna valley, there is another "fougou," but not such a remarkable one.

There is a wild and rambling legend about a squire who had hunted all day without success, and at nightfall, going sullenly homeward with horse and hounds, he put up a fine hare in the circle of the Dawns Mên. The hare made a bolt for the "fougou," and was followed into it by squire, horse and dogs. Having entered the tunnel, the chase proceeded underground for a mile or more until it was checked by a highly conventional gathering of witches, who were occupied in a manner proper to witches by the light of a great blue fire. I am told that there were traces of a village above and near this souterrain, and it seems that in every instance these places were associated with hut-dwellings on the surface. (There is the ruin of an underground construction near Chysauster).

I cannot say much concerning the relics of Early Christianity in Cornwall: the Saints' wells with their miraculous waters, the stone crosses, the chapels and oratories.

The Irish missionaries who, led by the goodly Breichan Brycheiniog, sought to uproot the gnarled paganism of Cornwall, prepared the way for a multitude of Saints and pious traditions. In the healing and oracular waters of the wells, people were cured of their ills and informed of coming events;

votive rags were hung on the briars by the well-side; pins were dropped into the clear spring, and farthings were laid on the stones as offerings to the *genius loci*.

A large book has been written about the stone crosses. Mr. Langdon tells us that there are no fewer than 340 of these in the county, and that no two of them are exactly alike.

THE MÊN SCRYFA

They are generally made of surface-granite, and are found everywhere, but principally by the sides of roads or trackways. Sculpturally, they range from a rough device, hacked on a rudely trimmed slab, to the most ornate of the so-called "Celtic" examples. Plentiful as the crosses are, it is certain that they existed formerly in much greater numbers. They have been treated with little respect in modern times, and have

been used as walling materials, as parts of pig-troughs and foot-bridges, and as seats: one has been used as a stand for a beehive, and another as the pivot for a thrashing-machine.

The inscribed stones belong to Christian times. Our drawing shows the Mên Scryfa which stands on the open moor, not far from the Mên-an-Tol. It commemorates one Rialobran, the son of Cunoval, and has been upset more than once by treasure-seekers; when Blight wrote his book (1858) it lay in a pit which had been dug by one of these covetous and stupid people.

PIT-DWELLINGS ON MULFRA

ROMANCE AND REALITY

"The inhabitants of Cornwall . . . like their climate, are still marked by peculiar features of character." C. S. GILBERT.

". . . he had heard a hint
Of such a Spirit in these halls of old,
But thought, like most men, that there was nothing in't
Beyond the rumour which such spots unfold." BYRON.

Chapter XII

Romance and Reality

TO write about a county and say nothing whatever about the folk who live in it would be ungrateful and unforgivable indeed, especially in the case of a people so interesting and so distinct as the Cornish people.

Cornwall has produced or sustained no small number of remarkable, notorious or justly celebrated men. When you consider the geographical extent of the county, the enlivening effect which sea air has upon the wits, and the many reasons which induce men to remove themselves from the fierce, surveillant and tumultuous cities, you have little cause to wonder at this assembly. Cornwall has the power of assimilating and re-fashioning the alien individual in a way which is observable in places where the local character and the local influences are overwhelmingly strong. The process is rapid. However determined the resistance of the individual may be, he is seized, quelled and subjugated, corrupted or ennobled in accordance with his predisposition; he is forcibly adopted, branded and stamped for ever with the impress of Cornwall. Hence it is that the worthies of Cornwall (as they are so indiscriminately called) whether native-born or imported, present themselves in a typically Cornish ensemble: they have the particular strength, oddness, meanness or greatness which grow so freely in the Cornish environment, and which we cannot leave out of account in dealing with that marvellous county. It is truer of Cornwall than of any other district

whatsoever that it sets its mark not only on the indigenous but on all who, coming from elsewhere, reside therein for any considerable time. Natives have told me that the breezes are so potent, the spirit of the place so whimsical and wayward, that strangers grow all soft and doddery; nay, lose their senses and go downright mad. There is something in this: it is not contradicted by evidence. Queer people seem to become queerer after a residence in Cornwall; all your faculties and proclivities and faults become intensified and developed—growing fast and luxuriously like the broccolo.

In some respects—but only in some respects—the Cornish people are not unlike the Welsh. I would not say that they are untruthful; but I would say that their statements are coloured habitually by a preconceived notion of the ideal or expedient which may or may not stand in discernible relation to actual fact. The general Cornish character has elements which are emphatically primitive—or rather, those elements are more in evidence in Cornwall than they are elsewhere in Britain—and in the primitive mind the distinction between the ideal and the actual is not clearly recognized. Such confusions add piquancy to conversations and situations which might otherwise be dull, and invest the most ordinary affairs with uncertainties and surprises.

But the Cornish character shows an infinity of local variations. In one parish the men may be as bold as lions, and in the adjacent one as nervy as mice. For example, the fishermen of St. Ives are grand, adventurous fellows, undaunted by fog or tempest; but in another fishing village, not far distant, and placed within the arms of a sheltering bay, the fisherman who contemplates leaving harbour is said to take a lighted

A CORNISH NOCTURNE.

candle to his doorway—if the flame burns untremulously steady, he says the weather is too calm; if it is blown out, it is too rough. Between extremes of cowardice and courage, of exaltation and abasement, the character of the Cornish peasant touches heights of exceptional nobility and sinks to depths of exceptional degradation. That, briefly, is one of the distinguishing marks of that character: its range or flexibility. None of your Saxon stodginess.

GURNARD'S HEAD

Speaking of the inhabitants of Cornwall, old Dr. Borlase said: "Surrounded (almost) as they are by the sea, and reckoning themselves as it were of another and different nation from the English, in military expeditions they have generally kept themselves more unmixed from the rest of the army they roll with than the inhabitants of other counties." This aloofness is still a characteristic of the Cornish people, as it is also of the Welsh, particularly of the Welsh who live in Gower and in Pembrokeshire. It is an aloofness which shows itself

in the attitude towards strangers and in the resistance to innovations and improvements and to the growth of civilized knowledge. I believe that this attitude is not uncommon in the case of people who live in peninsulas or small islands, or who are removed to some distance from the diffusion centres of civilization, and it is due probably as much to geographical as to racial causes. It certainly cannot be said that the Cornish are a pure Celtic people. They form a conglomerate in which the Celtic streak is well marked; but they are less sharply differentiated in the racial sense from other Britons than are the peoples of Wales and Ireland: a fact which is amply proved by the disappearance of their language and by the absence of any serious attempt to revive it. The character of the folk who are born in Cornwall, or who enter the county as settlers is a peninsular character, produced by environment; it is a locally contagious character, distinct in itself, and peculiar to Cornwall—not to a race or even to a clan; it is fashioned by a number of coincident causes and suggestions working together; in a word, it is territorial.

Carew gives us a pleasant account of the eminent Cornishmen who had lived before his time. He tells us of one John of Cornwall, a learned man of the twelfth century who studied at Rome and "wrote of the Incarnation of Christ against Peter Lumbard, and dedicated the same to Pope Alexander the Third, by whom he was highly favoured." Then we have the sad history of Simon Thurway; a warning to those who inflate themselves with mere learning and mistake their distention for true greatness. "Simon," he informs us, "after he had outgone all the Oxford scholars in profane learning (saith the commendable, painful antiquary, and my kind

auch Ruan

friend, Master Hooker) passed from thence to Paris, and there so profited in the study of divinity that he attained the chiefest place among the profound Sorbonists. But it was a windy knowledge that thus filled his sails of glory, which grew at last so to tempest his wits as he held Aristotle superior to Moses and Christ, and yet but equal to himself. But this extreme surquedry forfeited his wits, so as at last they could not save him to know any letter in the book, or to remember aught that he had done." Poor Simon, all vainly puffed up with scholarship, fell into a moony madness and became more ignorant and helpless than a child. Of strong men, Carew gives several instances. There was "one John Bray (well known to me as my tenant)" who "carried upon his back, at one time, by the space well-near of a butt length, six bushels of wheaten meal, reckoning fifteen gallons to the bushel, and the miller, a lubber of four and twenty years of age, upon the whole." And then—"John Romane, a short clownish grub, would bear the whole carcase of an ox, and yet never tugged with him, like that so famous Milo, when he was a calf." Truly, the "short clownish grub" was a sturdy fellow. "For activity," he mentions that "one Kiltor, committed to Launceston gaol for the last Cornish commotion, laying there in the castle-green on his back, threw a stone of some pounds weight over that tower's top which leadeth into the park."

Borlase, speaking of wrestling, less practised in his day (1750) than it had been formerly, says: "The Cornish have been remarkable for their expertness in Athletary contentions for many ages, as if they inherited the skill and strength of their fabulous first Duke Corinaeus, whose fame consists chiefly in the reputation he won by wrestling with, and over-

coming the giant Gogmagog, and that fable perhaps founded five hundred years since upon the then acknowledged and universal reputation of the people of this county for wrestling."

Wrestling matches still take place. I remember seeing one in a field at St. Hilary, the competitors ringed in by a dark mass of spectators on the green. The wrestlers, having previously stripped to the waist, put on little short canvas shirts, at which they pulled and tugged when coming to grips.

Cornish people seem to live to great ages, though some of the records of longevity should, perhaps, be treated with a certain reserve. C. S. Gilbert gives a long list of centenarians, and super-centenarians, including a woman named Chester Marchant who lived in Gwithian, and who, in 1676, according to one Mr. Scawen, reached the astounding age of 164 years. "At the Lizard, a place greatly exposed, Mr. Cole, minister of Landewednac, appears by the parish register to have been aged above 120 years by far when he died in 1683." So there you have two people whose united ages, taking a moderate estimate in the case of Mr. Cole, may have totalled 290 years. Gilbert, by the way, finishes his account of the Cornish people very quaintly by discoursing of their passion for pies. "The people of Cornwall make pies of almost everything eatable, and thus render many things not eatable except to themselves, as witness their squab pie, sweet giblet pie, herby pie, pilchard pie, muggoty pie, potatoe pie, etc." The Cornish pasty, of which vile imitations are occasionally offered in London, is a very happy development of the pie craze. It is a palatable mass of cold meat and vegetables, well seasoned and enclosed in a long case of pastry with twisted and tapered ends; splendid for taking on a day's excursion.

Forgive this digression to pies and pasties: such things may seem trivial, yet they have not been considered unworthy of notice by learned and serious writers.

If I had to choose a personage who might be regarded as representing the Cornishman at his best, I should certainly choose Richard Trevithick: not by any means one of the best known Cornish characters, but a man whose romantic and arduous life, whose sturdy independence, skill, and vigour of mind and body make him a truly notable and noble figure. He is usually thought of as the man who contributed somewhat to the invention of the locomotive: actually, it would be far nearer the truth to describe him as the man who invented the locomotive.

Cornwall has many distinguished engineers to her credit, and it is said that the first steam pumping engine was set up in the county as far back as 1702. It is certain that a steam engine was erected in 1720 at the Ludgvan mine, and that several were in use by the middle of the eighteenth century. Trevithick's father was born in 1735, and he was one of the practical engineers who deeply resented Watt's visit to Cornwall and his somewhat arrogant demeanour, in 1778. Richard Trevithick was born in 1771, and went to school, in due course, at Camborne, where, as is so often the case with boys who become famous in later years, he shirked his lessons and proved himself both strong-willed and rebellious. In 1790 he had a job at the Stray Park mine, and in 1795—at the age of 24—he erected a double-action steam engine at Wheal Treasury. A year or so later, he moved to the celebrated Ding Dong mine (whose dismal ruins I have described), and began to concern himself with the problems of high-pressure steam.

DEPTFORD LIBRARIES

In spite of Watt's jealous and spiteful assertion that high-pressure engines were a danger to the public, Trevithick soon had several of them at work: in 1797 he made a working model of a locomotive, and on Christmas Day, 1801, he put an engine on the roads between Camborne, Tuckingmill and Trehidy, which carried ten or twelve people and went up hill faster

CAMBORNE

than a man could walk. Although it is recorded of this engine that it could do twenty miles an hour on the level, I think this is an exaggeration. It made its way to London, where it fizzed and puffed and clanked triumphantly along Oxford Street, all the traffic cleared out of the way, all the shops closed and shuttered for fear of explosions, and all the roofs crowded with excited and cheering spectators. Watt, I imagine, must have looked rather sour. There is little doubt

Lockatt Station and ruins of mine.

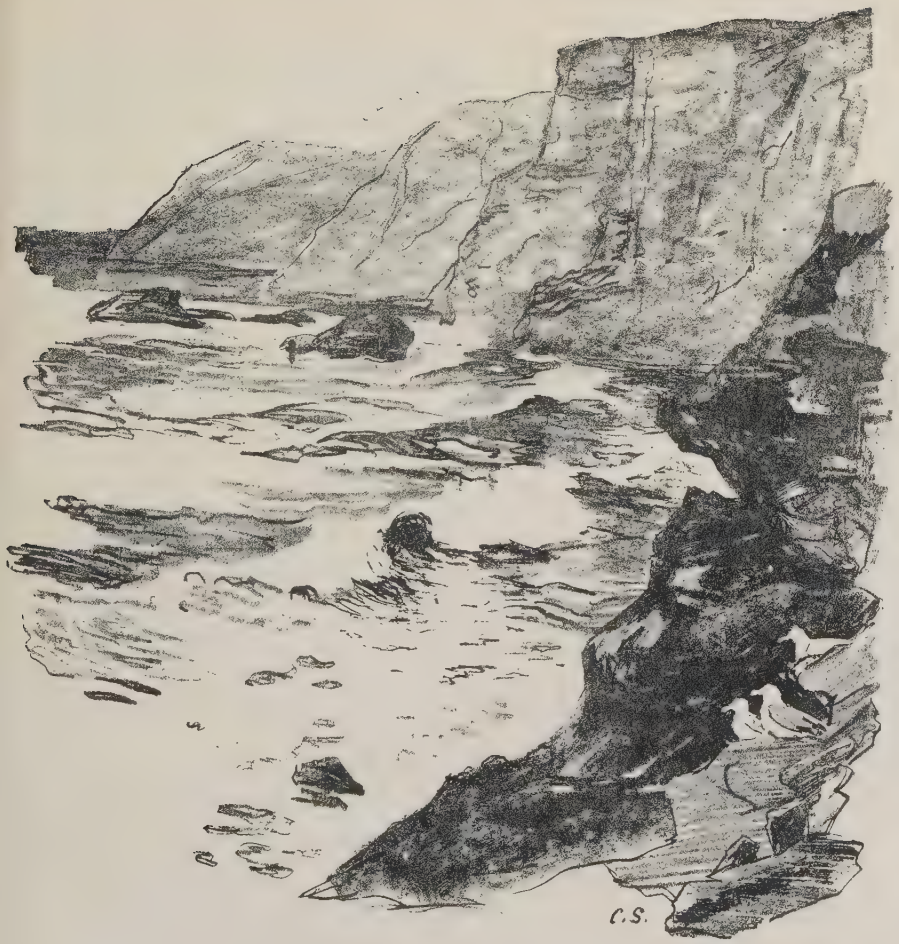
that the invention of the locomotive, in so far as it is due to the genius of any one individual, is due to the genius of Richard Trevithick.

Trevithick was never financially prosperous, and he was wretchedly duped and deceived by mere business folk. He sought fortune with no better success in South America, where he had a series of wonderful adventures. He was a man of magnificent character, steadfast, brave and honourable. His physique was superb: he stood over six feet high, and was agile and muscular. Although he was a quick-tempered man he was cool and deliberate in action and had unshakable nerves. A fine fellow and a very great engineer, meriting our remembrance and admiration; and most emphatically one of the most splendid, though not one of the most conspicuous, of all the Cornish worthies.

I suppose that Cornwall has given birth to, or fostered or sheltered, a greater number of eccentric people than any other county. Of these eccentrics, some of the most noteworthy have been, and are at the present time, clergymen. Singularity of attire and misdemeanours in ritual are by no means infrequent in Cornish parishes. These irregularities are doubtless a cause of despair and grief to disciplinarians; but it must be admitted that the men who indulge in them, even when their attitude appears somewhat studied—and we question whether they are more theatrical than devout—are often delightful fellows, and loyally consecrated to the service of mankind.

But of all queer parochial clergy, past or present, none could be regarded as more peculiar or more lovable than Richard Stephen Hawker of Morwenstow. This remarkable man was born in 1804, and became Vicar of Morwenstow in

1824, holding this appointment until his death in 1875. From his boyhood he was an incorrigible practical joker. Baring-Gould, who wrote an account of his life, gives in detail the mermaid hoax which he played off, when a young man, on the people of Bude: the mermaid being none other than Hawker himself sitting on a moonlit rock in the sea, with a seaweed wig on his head and an oilskin wrap over his legs, flashing the beams from a hand-mirror and singing in a strident falsetto. His clothes and customs as Vicar of Morwenstow were truly amazing. He took a fancy to a poncho (a cape of the simplest kind—merely a piece of fabric with a hole cut in the middle through which you push your head), and assured people that this was an "authentic vestment," of a pattern approved by the early saints. He wore a claret-coloured coat with long tails, and beneath it a blue fisherman's jersey with a little red cross woven into the side. His legs were generally encased in a pair of heavy sea-boots. At first he wore a college cap on his head, but this was replaced by a pink brimless beaver. His gloves were scarlet. A pencil attached to a bit of string dangled from his button-hole. "My coat," he would say mysteriously to a gaping and credulous stranger, "is that of an Armenian archimandrite; my cloak is the habit of St. Pandan and St. Teilo." He was followed to church by a procession of eight or ten cats, who capered about in the chancel during service and were stroked and patted by the Vicar while he recited prayers and psalms. However, with all his peculiarities, Hawker was a man of rare character; a man of overflowing kindness and uncommon wit, not often equalled for brilliance in retort, firm, and at times formidable. The people of Morwenstow, when he came there, were savage



ON THE CORNISH COAST

wreckers: he changed their ways, at first unaided and hated, and taught them the meaning of humanity; he was, in fact, a missioner in the truest sense of the word. He was a writer of smooth and melodious verse, though not a great poet. Hawker of Morwenstow, one of the most striking figures in nineteenth century Cornwall, now hardly remembered, deserves commemoration as a sturdy and dutiful minister, powerful in well-doing, not shrinking from the assault on folly and brutality and cowardice which was demanded of him in that wild region, but enforcing every lesson by his own bravery and vigour.

I have taken these two men—Trevithick and Hawker—as examples of typical Cornish worthies of the past. I should like to parade a score of others, but that would be outside my present purpose. However, I cannot forbear the mention of one living worthy who is practically unknown outside his own district, and who has never, to my knowledge, found his way into a book: my friend Jim Thomas, some-time a rural postman of Camborne, now retired, but still carrying on his trade of boot-maker.

Jim Thomas is an antiquary, a lecturer, collector and preacher. He has written a paper for the Royal Geological Society of Cornwall, and his knowledge of the ancient remains in the Camborne area is not equalled by that of any other living man. He has corresponded with Sir John Evans. In his little cottage he has amassed a collection of rarities, of things ancient, or primitive, or of historical interest—a collection that overflows into the garden and comprises objects of every conceivable kind. He has played a part in the unearthing of those peculiar flint implements for which Mr. J. G. Marsden

has suggested a Palæolithic origin, though our experts are not in agreement on this matter. But whether these flints are Palæolithic or not, Jim Thomas was probably right when he came to the conclusion that they were to be reckoned among the most ancient things discovered in Cornwall. Mr. Thomas is not given to hesitation in matters archæological, and, like other men whose science is derived from the study of objects rather than of books, he has developed an instinct which enables him, in most cases, to hit the nail on the head. Although I may not always be able to agree with him, I cannot but admire his fine enthusiasm for antiquity, his love for and natural understanding of the things of the past.

His life has been an adventurous one. Born in 1849 in the parish of Gwinear, near Camborne, the son of a mining engineer, he had, in his own words "a roving spirit," and in 1871 he was in America, engineering and mining. In 1873 he was back in England, working in coal mines and in engineering shops, and acquiring skill as a boot-maker. He became a rural postman in 1891, and delivered letters for thirty years in Camborne. "I was always a great lover of the antique," he writes, "even from childhood; and if anyone found anything they brought it to me, to tell them what it was." "The love for the antique," he says in a paper on the Stone Age, "seems to be a part of my nature." But the dominant note of his character is struck by these words in one of his letters—"Who would be content to remain a fool in such an interesting world?" With that quick, apprehensive mind of his, and that intense love of the "interesting world," one cannot but regret that Jim Thomas was not able to avail himself, as a young man, of the educational advantages of to-day. He might

have become eminent. It is for men like him that Universities exist; while how many an undergraduate that I know might, with greater profit to the community, be sent to the coal mines.

Mr. Thomas's name betrays his family's origin, but I know that he would resent deeply the suggestion that he was not Cornish. Moreover, as I have pointed out, to become Cornish it is not necessary to belong to an indigenous stock.

The legends and ghostly stories of Cornwall seem to grow so inevitably out of the landscape and out of the minds of the people, they are so essentially local in character, so closely linked with Cornish places and Cornish folk, and many of them are so little known to general readers, that they fall naturally into their place in this book.

In a strange mid-way between romance and reality are the figures of actual personalities which are in process of becoming legendary; or which, while they retain the names of real people and are displayed within a comparatively modern setting, have already received the stature and endowments of the supernatural. Every student of primitive man is acquainted with this process—the process which, in lower cultures, transforms distinguished men into gods or devils. To this category belongs the wicked Tregeagle.

I was surprised, in reading an account of Anne Jeffries, an epileptic and perhaps a clairvoyant, who was "fed for six months by a small sort of airy people called fairies," to find that she was sent to Bodmin gaol on a warrant issued by John Tregeagle, steward to the Earl of Radnor. This happened somewhere about 1650. Tregeagle was a Justice, an actual historical person who sent policemen with warrants for witches.

SUNSET

After Anne Jeffries was released from gaol, he locked her up in his house and kept her under observation, finally setting her free again, but forbidding her to return to her former employers. His procedure was drastic, and in our eyes lawless, but it would not have excited much comment in the seventeenth century.

Now, what is the legend connected with this witch-hunting Justice? In general outline it is somewhat as follows:

Tregeagle was a wealthy and powerful man, able, by means of his riches, to keep on the right side both of Church and Law. As a magistrate, he cruelly extinguished those who were offensive to him. His domestic life was diversified by acts of murderous ferocity. As a landlord, his rapacity knew no bounds. When he lay dying, innumerable devils watched expectantly for the flitting soul, but Tregeagle's wealth bought him temporary security, the forces of the Church were marshalled in overwhelming strength, and the body was buried with funeral pomp in the church of St. Breock. Some time after this, a dispute arose concerning the ownership of certain lands near Bodmin. Tregeagle had acted as steward to one of the claimants; he had forged documents, transferred deeds illegally, and brought affairs into a pretty pass. At the final hearing of the case, the defendant asked leave to produce an additional witness. The witness entered the court, and was recognized as none other than Tregeagle himself, pale and terrible, raised from the dead. The examination of this ghastly witness revealed the true facts of the case, and the defendant proved his right to the land. But Tregeagle had to be disposed of, and the defendant, observing that he

entrusted him to the care of the Judge and the Prior with whom he had been on such excellent terms, walked out of the court. And now a sickening, chill horror filled the room, while priests and lawyers wrangled and reasoned and Tregeagle stood there in silence. It was decided that he should be taken to Dosmary Pool, protected by holy spells, and set to work to bale out the water with a perforated limpet shell. This was done; but the devils, not despairing of their dues, kept incessant watch on the wretched creature, seeking to drive him from his task and into their clutches. So they raised a terrible storm, and Tregeagle, smitten by icy hails, scorched by lightnings, bent in the blast of the tempest, fled from the pool. At his heels ran a legion of bellowing demons, and thrice round the pool raced dead man and devils, with such cries and roarings, all mixed with the fury of the storm, that any man who heard them would have gone stark raving mad. After the third round, Tregeagle, endowed with miraculous strength and lightness, leaped clean across the water, and rushed over the moors to the holy oratory of St. Roche. Up the rock he flew, and pushed his head in through the window, to the dismay of the good hermit, and there he stuck. There he stuck for days; convulsed with the agonies of the damned every time the saint said his prayers, and driving away all the devout folk from the chapel. But he dared not back out, for the devils hovered in the wind to take him.

St. Roche, as you can imagine, realizing that there are limits even to the hospitality of a sanctuary, was anxious to get rid of his visitor. He mustered a strong force of holy men, and Tregeagle was escorted to Padstow, where he was set to weave ropes of sand. Here, his direful howling annoyed the

people, who applied to St. Petroc for assistance. Petroc bound Tregeagle with mystical fetters and took him to Berepper, about two miles south of Helston, where he was given the task of carrying sacks of sand across the Loo estuary and emptying them at Porth Leven. Roaring like a bull, he toiled industriously, but one day the devil tripped him up and he sprawled in the sea, scattering his load of sand. This sand may yet be seen; it is known as Loo Bar, and it blocks the sea-approach to Helston. The people of Helston, who found their place converted by this sudden accident from a flourishing port to an inland village, and who were, moreover, sadly disturbed by the roaring of Tregeagle, told the holy men plainly that they must make other arrangements. By the power of holy enchantments Tregeagle was conveyed to the Land's End. There he was employed in sweeping the sand from Porthcurno round Tol-Pedn into Nanjizal Bay, and there he is still at work. On stormy nights you will hear the tortured Tregeagle, now screaming, now roaring; Tregeagle outcast, neither saved nor yet wholly damned; devoted eternally to a hopeless task, a lonely and a furious ghost—"Tregeagle the Bull."

I think it is probable that the Tregeagle of this story—a story full of anachronism and confusion—has absorbed the character and features of some much earlier figure. We may assume that the Earl of Radnor's steward was a man of such detested memory that his name drew to itself a whole mass of legendary iniquities, inherited perhaps from villains of prehistoric times.

"The lower classes of the inhabitants of Cornwall," writes C. S. Gilbert, "are strenuous believers in the existence of

Thatched Cottage in [illegible]

C 5

fairies." And he goes on: "The descriptions given of these aerial beings, in the traditions and superstitions of the people, are amusing. They are generally described to be in the full perfection of youth and beauty, as enjoying the most elegant and finished forms, and clothed in loose flowing garments of azure, blue or purple . . . whilst chaplets of the most beautiful and odoriferous flowers . . . adorn their heads, necks and arms; and gems which exceed in brilliance the pellucid drops of early dew give a lustre to their fair and flowing tresses." These are the friendly and pretty fairies, the "little sodjers" and little ladies who enlivened the lonely hours of the old woman in Penberth Cove. The spriggans, buccas, and piskies are of a different order. Spriggans are ugly and monstrous creatures, haunting the rocks and cairns and stones, guardians of buried treasure, of evil disposition and lovers of fraud. Buccas are underground people, said by some to be the spirits of accursed Jews, ancient workers in the tin mines. Piskies are malicious sprites who delight in the discomfiture of humans: they mislead the traveller, frighten the housewife, turn everything upside-down.

Mrs. Tregurtha of Newlyn, one of those fine old folk who tell you of ghostly adventures in a manner that prohibits the least doubt, remembers seeing what was presumably a spriggan. It was many years ago and she was a little girl. There was sickness in the house, and she was sent with her brother, at dawn, to fetch water from the well. This well was near a disused quarry by the stream; it is not there now, but seventy years ago it was the only well in the place. As she was standing by the well, shivering a little in the chill of the early morning, she felt a sudden terror of something that she would

see if she turned round. She turned round; and it was there, right enough! She describes it as "*a man with all his bones showing.*" The child gave a yell, but when her brother questioned her she could only point into vacancy—the apparition had vanished.

It was Mrs. Tregurtha who told us of another early morning apparition. Some boys and girls were out soon after sunrise on May Day, and what should they see, sitting on the top bar of a gate, but a little ghost only ten or twelve inches high. It was the ghost, in miniature, of a certain bad old squire who had died not long previously. Yes; there he was, all neat, complete and correct, shrunk to a spectral mannikin, perched on the gate. "Look! look!" cried the children to each other; but a blackbird flew out of the hedge, and the little ghost flickered from sight.

The absorption of pagan legend by Christian legend has led to a confusion of saints and giants, of holy hermits and savage wizards, of heathen enchantment and sacred miracle. For example, we are told that St. Just and St. Sennen, in the course of a dispute, hurled two vast masses of rock at each other: the rocks met in mid flight and fell together to the earth. And we have St. Keverne, pursuing his thievish visitor, St. Just, and throwing at him the great boulders of the Crowza Downs.

Of all the many Cornish Saints, St. Piran, not one of the best remembered, was certainly one of the most notable. He plays an interesting part in Cornish tradition—a part which is obviously borrowed from pre-Christian times—for he is the reputed discoverer of tin. He was a keen geologist, and decorated his cell with rock-crystals. One day, he

observed a thread of molten metal flowing from a stone on his hearth, and realizing that this was a matter of great scientific interest, if not of far-reaching practical consequences, he called in a brother saint, Chiwidden, whom he knew to be well versed in the learning of eastern lands. Between them, they invented a method for smelting tin in large quantities. The Saints convened a gathering of Cornishmen from near and far, explained and demonstrated their process, and ordained a great feast and merry-making. Here we surely have the metamorphosed form of an early Celtic story: and it is more than probable that the story is substantially true as regards the manner of the discovery.

In the fable of St. Ludgvan, we get the transition from the magical to the miraculous. St. Ludgvan built a fine church on the hill, but he needed a really striking advertisement, and so he prayed for water. Straightway, a spring bubbled up out of the ground. The Saint bathed his eyes with the water, and found that his sight was miraculously intensified—his vision, in fact, became that of a combined microscope and telescope. Nor was this all; he drank, and acquired the double gift of volubility and eloquence. Then he prayed that all children baptized with the waters of this holy well should be secure from the hangman's rope. Why he should have desired this particular effect is not clear, but an angel appeared, and assured him that the request was quite in order and that his prayer was acceptable. The first baptism was rather a terrible affair. Whenever the Saint pronounced the holy words, the child, endowed by the water with a horrid precocity, uttered a torrent of blasphemous gibberish. St. Ludgvan discovered the name of the evil spirit who was at work, and being thus

able to come to grips with him he wrestled mightily in spiritual combat, and with words of power he cast him out, and ordered him to betake himself to the Red Sea. But the evil one played him a sorry trick. Assuming vast dimensions, he spat in the well; then seized the tower of the church by its pinnacles, as a cowboy seizes the horns of a steer, and shook the whole fabric back and forth till it tottered and trembled; one of the pinnacles fell down, and the evil spirit vanished with a flash and a roar. It was then discovered that the waters of the well had lost their powers of strengthening vision.

I cannot tell you here of the sorcerers and giants, of palaces raised by enchantment from the deep, of the "knockers" in the mines and the brownies in the farmyards. Nowhere else in Britain is there such a wealth and variety of legend as there is in Cornwall, such a prevalence of uncanny suggestion. The story of Tregeagle has been given at length because, since a selection had to be made, that story seemed to contain more of the distinctive Cornish elements than any other. There are, however, an immense number of stories which are hardly less thrilling or less characteristic; and, although many of these were collected by Hunt and Bottrell, I believe that there are many others which are unknown outside the county; to say nothing of the local variations of those which have already found their way into books.

No one can begin to know Cornwall until he has learnt something, not merely of the physical appearance of the land, but of the minds of the Cornish people, their legends and fancies and superstitions. I have tried, in this concluding chapter, to give some idea of the Cornish psychology as it is manifested

C S
Hetland

in the characters and stories of the Cornish folk; not because I can claim a special knowledge of that psychology (I do not), but because no one can see Cornwall or think of Cornwall without being aware of its presence.

EPILOGUE.

"One Eare tingles; some there be
That are snarling now at me."

HERRICK.

Epilogue

IN writing this book, I have been compelled to omit a wealth of material, both topographical and literary, and I am not unaware of the apparent shortcomings which such omission has entailed. There are people who will complain, perhaps justly, that I have given them too much of this and too little of that; they will point out that certain villages or hills or coves have not even been mentioned, while others seem to have been given undue prominence. Others will deplore the inadequate treatment of the St. Ives and Newlyn painters (who are popularly confounded with the native products of Cornwall, for some inexplicable reason), the scant attention which has been given to churches, the cursory notice of Early Christian relics, and so on. Others again, anxious to maintain the superiority of our western breeds, will say that the Cornish character has been exhibited in a false light and with prejudice.

As regards omission, it must be remembered, that it was never intended, either by author or publishers, that this book should usurp the place of a guide or a history. Concentration on particular aspects would have led to the complete neglect of others, and it has been my intention to deal with Unknown Cornwall in a comprehensive rather than in a special sense.

Although I have designed the book primarily for those to whom Cornwall is literally unknown, it is my sincere hope that it will not be entirely without interest for those who are lucky enough to live there. At any rate, the admirable pictures which are here reproduced will be appreciated by every one, whether visitor, resident, or exile.

R

Among the exiles I must now, alas, include myself. And no exile has ever thought of his own country with a deeper affection, or reflected on her distant beauties with a more poignant regret. Cornwall is incomparably the strangest, most alluring and most wonderful of all the counties of England. In Cornwall there is a mystic interfusion of past and present, of the new and the ancient, which is not suggested in many other places, even where the wrecks of antiquity dominate in every sense of the word. I have felt such a sensation in looking from the tumbled walls of Troy, across the Plain and across the Straits to where the hollow hull of the "River Clyde," just discernible, stood below the ruins of Sedd-ul-Bahr. It is a sensation in which the illusion of time becomes momentarily apparent; in which the imaginary division between past and present is dissolved, and we are as conscious of the verity of the one as of the other. Looking from the hill of Hissarlik towards that yellow shore with its ruined forts, it may have been some recognition of the fellowship in great deeds of arms between the fighters of the Trojan wars and those who ran against the machine guns on that ghastly beach, some sense of the link between old tradition and modern daring, which gave a kind of immediacy to the acts of the past and induced a refluence of what we term the actual. The two concepts merge into each other. That is what you feel in the old stone enclosures of the Cornish moors, in the abandoned primitive villages and in the circles. Time suffers a contraction: you realize that you are close to the ancient builders, that the "old people" have left behind them, in these stones, something of themselves which is not only living but cognizant, and not only cognizant but definitely friendly or hostile. I have seen

vaster ruins in wilder places, but I have never felt the same intimacy with the primitive and the prehistoric that I have felt in Cornwall. Neither is this sensation peculiar to myself. It is felt by everyone who gets into touch with the true character of that marvellous land, even by those who are unversed alike in legend and in learning.

Thus, Cornwall has a life, an existence, a meaning, apart altogether from the fretting cares and dissolving joys of the present. Therein lies her charm, her power to enslave or distract, her call, and, to some, her terrors.

Mysterious land! Even to those who are familiar with her moods and appearances and with all the features of her coast and landscape she remains, in the profounder sense, Unknown Cornwall.

PUBLIC
DOMAIN

A WAYSIDE CROSS

INDEX

PAGE

Armed Knight, The . . . 24

Birch, Mr. John . . . 4
Blight, T. 69
Boleigh Circle . . . 177
Borlase, Copeland 168, 194, 204, 208,
Borlase, Dr. 5, 145, 179, 197, 217, 219
Boscawen Circle . . . 175
Boskednan Circle . . 178
Bosullow Crehyllys . . 206
Boussening 8
Bridger's Library . . 52
Bude 34, 35
Buryan Races . . . 28

Caer Bran . . . 118
Cape Cornwall . . . 19
Carew, Richard 5, 9, 51, 60, 64, 69, 75, 83, 121, 218
Carn Brea 117
Carn Euny, Souterrain at . 206
Carn Kenidjack . . . 113
Carter, Henry . . . 56
Carter, John . . . 55
Castle-an-Dinas . . . 197
Celts, The 191
Chûn Castle . . . 195
Chûn Quoit . . . 168
Chysauster 203
Clarice of Boleigh . . 26
Cliff Castles . . . 198
Constantine . . . 89
Crosses, Stone . . . 210
Cruel Coppinger . . . 24

PAGE

Ding Dong Mine . . 117
Dosmary Pool . . . 102
Druids . . . 134, 148

Edmonds, R. . . . 155
Enys Dodman . . . 26

Falmouth . . . 73, 83
Forbes, Stanhope A. . 5, 61, 62
Fougou Caves . . . 206

Gilbert, C. S. 75, 129, 220, 232
Godolphin, Sir Francis . . 66
Grandisson, Bishop . . 27
Greeb, The 26
Gunnislake 99
Gweek 90

Hawker, R. S. . . . 223
Hayle 43
Hingston Downs . . . 99
Hurling 121
Hut-circles 202

Killigrews, The . 85, 86
Killigrew, Dame Mary . . 87
Knill, John . . 80, 81

Lamorna 42
Land's End . . . 19
Lanyon Quoit . . 160, 171
Launceston . . . 100
Leland 62, 76, 84, 100, 105

	PAGE
Liskeard	105
Lostwithiel	106
Ludgvan	6
Marazion	53, 54, 68
Mên-an-Tol	181
Mên Scryfa	211
Morrab Library	53
Morwenstow	24
Mousehole	51, 62
Mulfra Hill	119
Mulfra Quoit	159, 170
Mylor Church	89
Nanjizal Bay	26
Newlyn	58
Newquay	40
Norden	6, 194
Ottery, River	33, 100
Padstow	40
Penberth	42
Pendennis Point	88
Penzance	51
Perkin Warbeck	19
Probus	108
Restronguet Creek	89
Ruan Lanihorne	43, 89
Saints, Legends of the	234
St. Austell	108
St. Buryan	26, 27
St. Hilary	54
St. Hya	73, 74
St. Ives	51, 73
Sennen Cove	19, 20
Simpson, Charles	11
Stripple Stones	173
Tamar, River	23, 100
Thomas, Jim	226
Tregeagle	228
Tregeseal Circles	177
Tregurtha, Mrs.	233
Trencrom	198
Trendrine Hill	119
Trenuggo Stone	181
Treryn Dinas	200
Trevethy Quoit	167
Trevithick, Richard	221
Truro	108, 109
Watch Croft	118
Wesley, John	76
Whitesand Bay	19
Wrestling	219
Zennor Quoit	169

942.37

2 ?